

INDEX CARD

s-s--Creek Nation
Creek
Cremets--Creek
Cremets--Creek
household manufactures--Creek
Food--Creek
Osages
Ludia F. St. to
Tobacco Flower
Sacred Tobacco
Medicine--Muchee
Superstitions--Creek

5367

Field worker: Dawes Fife
April 19, 1937

Interview with George Clinton, age 71
fullblood Euchee Indian
living four miles N. W.
of Slick, Oklahoma

(Biographic Sketch.)

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George Clinton was born west of Haskell, Oklahoma, in 1866, in a log cabin. This cabin did not have floors, only the ground pounded down until smooth. His parents died when he was very young. They moved from west of Haskell to Thapthlecco settlement west of Beggs, lived there a year or two, then moved to Big Pond settlement on Salt Creek, south of Bristow.

When Mr. Clinton was 16 or 17 years old he started working for Uncle Jess Allen, of Slick, as a cook and helped with cattle. Later, at the age of 20 years, when Legus Perryman was chief of the Creek Indians, he served for four years as a Light horseman. When the Creeks received their \$29.00 payment, he acted as one of the guards, bringing the gold, silver and currency in kegs by hacks, drawn by two horses, to Okmulgee from Muskogee, Oklahoma.

While a Light horseman Mr. Clinton inflicted punishment on criminals according to the Creek Indian laws then. He used hickory switches, giving them about 50

-2-

5367

lashes across the back or as designated by the law. After serving four years as Light horseman, he became a member of the House of Warriors and is still a member yet. For a number of years he lived around Kelleyville, and has only lived at his present location a year.

He worked as a cowboy until about 20 years ago.

He is now farming his land. In the earlier days the Indians, in order to supply a living for their families, killed deer, skunks and coons, trading them at Okmulgee to Captain Severs, and at Tulsa, for supplies. Some Indians took theirs to Muskogee.

The women made all their own clothes, getting material at stores. They made a living this way, together with the small payments they received. Mr. Clinton said years ago, before the leather saddles were common, the Indians made their own saddles out of wood. Old Euche Tom, father of Euche Tom living south of Sapulpa, made them out of lickory and post oak. He carved the saddles out of a block of wood. The entire saddle was carved out of a solid piece of wood. He made the saddle horns also out of wood. Cinches were made of Buckskin. Saddles of that type aren't found these days.

-3-

5367

Mr. Clinton told me about the Indian potato. This potato grows wild and there are very few of them. Many people do not know of their existence. The Indian Irish potato is a little larger in diameter than a silver dollar. The flavor is somewhat different than the ordinary potato, being sweeter. This potato grows in bottom land and is called by the Indians mud potato. The Osage Indians come down and trade for these potatoes. They can be sold to the Osage Indians at five dollars a bushel, providing one is lucky enough to find them. These potatoes cannot be cultivated as the tame ones are because they will not live when planted as other potatoes are. Some of these potatoes can be found near Slick, Oklahoma.

Dave's Wife
Field worker,
Feb 23, 1937

Thomas F. Meagher,
Supt, Indian-Pioneer History
Tulsa, Okla.

THE TOBACCO FLOWER
Interview with George Clinton
88-year old Uchee Indian

The Tobacco Flower used by the Indian comes from a tobacco plant similar to ordinary tobacco plants the flowers are the same but the leaves are smaller. The plant grows to a height one-half foot. The leaves are not used just the flowers which are white but turns tan when dried. The seeds are brown about the size of a mustard seed.

When the plant blooms Indians go out before dawn and when such birds as the Jaybird, Dove, Crows and Woodchuck sing they pick four flowers from each plant one for each bird.

The tobacco flower is used by the Indians for medicinal purposes. They smoke it when someone is sick.

It is a very rare tobacco at one time it was entirely lost sight of but later a small plant was discovered in some under brush and it started again.

THE TOBACCO FLOWER
 Comment by Thomas F. Meagher
 Supervisor, Indian-Pioneer History S-149

352

In recent years the Smithsonian Institute made a search for this little tobacco, known anciently among certain tribes as the sacred tobacco, i. e., the special kind of tobacco used and smoked in the calumet or peace pipes on ceremonial occasions and at peace councils. On such occasions there was an exchange of tobaccos.

The tradition concerning its origin sounds mythical but appears to be founded upon facts. It reads as follows:-

"A long time ago certain Kis-pa-~~o~~-la-gi (Ispagees) come from God and brought the 12 sacred brass and copper plates (Tucki-batchi plates of the Tucki-batchi tribe of the Old Muscogee nation are referred to). One of the Kis-pa-~~o~~-la-gi (Ispagees) returned to God. The others remained. One of these Tucki-batchi took the wrong medicine and died. They buried him and on the seventh day, a beautiful little plant with a white flower grew forth from the grave.

From this little tobacco flower, "Wild Tobacco", "Old mens' Tobacco" or Hitchi-nanugi the Tuckibatchi Indians got their Medicine,- Tuckibatchi tradition.

The use of this little tobacco spread to other tribes, especially the Shawnees, Uchees and Muskogees of Shawnee association. No solemn conclave was held without the sweet odor from the fumes of the little sacred tobacco to make binding what was said and done. It was never to be cut nor broken for fear of breaking the binding hand of friendship, but was cut by biting teeth. The bloody handed warrior dropped both scalping knife and war club when ever he whiffed ^{its} peaceful odors.

The Tobacco Flower
Page 2.

353

But the use of the little plant was lost with the passing of the old Indian peace makers. For 30 years or more the Indians often spoke of the "East Tobacco".

About 15 years ago Dr. John S. Anton of the Smithsonian Institute made an exhaustive search for this tobacco, but gave it up as irtrievably lost.

George Clinton finds the Tobacco. I instructed field workers to be on the lookout for the lost little sacred Tobacco, and Field Worker Daves Fife of Saulton found the tobacco in the possession of George Clinton, the aged Uchee Indian. Mr. Clinton discovered the plant growing wild and collected some of the seed.

Indian peace councils are a thing of the past, but it might be the use of the little sacred tobacco will be resumed by adding its flavors to the "Lucifer" or "Chesterfields" of our fair sex, or perhaps its sweet and sacred odors will find their way to our legislative bodies.- The lost Tobacco is found.

Thomas F. Magghar, Supervisor
Indian-Pioneer History S-149

Refer to 42nd Annual Report, Smithsonian Institute.