

INDEX CARDS:

Choctaw Nation
Blue County
Katy Railroad
Colbert
Scipio
Choctaw Political Parties
Choctaw Ball Games
Red Oak
Green Corn Dance
Pioneer Preacher
Dawes Commission

LOW, H. D.

INTERVIEW.
BIOGRAPHY FORM

8372.

2

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty.

This report made on (date) August 26, 1937. 1937

1. Name H. D. Low

2. Post Office Address Davis, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Routel, Box 74.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 6 Year 1860.

5. Place of birth Kansas.

6. Name of Father Jonathan Low Place of birth Ohio.

Other information about father Boot and shoe maker.

7. Name of Mother Suzann Rodman Place of birth Ohio.

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 6.

H. D.

INTERVIEW.

8372.

3

John Daugherty,
Field Worker.

An Interview with Mr. H. D. Low,
Route 1, Box 74, Davis, Oklahoma.

I came to the Territory with my parents in 1873 from Kansas. We settled in Blue County in the Choctaw Nation, about fifteen miles from Caddo. The Katy Railroad had just gotten to Durant. There was only one small store in Durant at this time. It was owned and operated by Dixon Durant. We lived near Durant for several years.

One day I started with a load of corn to the mill at Colbert. It was raining and there was no road. I had to pick my way as I went. When I got there it was late, and there were many ahead of me, so I turned my horses loose to graze. I had to stay all night and most

of the next day before I could get my corn ground.

When I got ready to go home it was almost dark, but I started. I could not see a thing, but the horses took me safely home. They had only the trail which the wagon had made coming to Colbert from Durant.

I was married to Melvina Ingram, a Choctaw Indian, August 6, 1882, according to the Choctaw Indian law. I knew

-2-

Judge Folsom very well and he let me have a license for eight dollars instead of the usual fifty.

We moved to Scipio, northwest of McAlester in the Choctaw Nation. Those were troublesome times for the political parties among the Indians. They were bitter toward each other.

There were the Buzzard and Eagle parties among the Choctaws. Each party fought hard to place its men in power. At one election they almost had a war, and it was necessary for the United States Soldiers from Fort Smith to take a hand and quiet them.

George Choate was sheriff of Tobucksy County and he was an Eagle. One day he came to a camp meeting near my home. During the day a runner came and warned him that the Buzzards were coming for him. Some of his friends hid him in my corn crib and stood guard all day. The Buzzards did not get there, but if they had, there would probably have been a small war.

I used to attend Indian ball games. When one county played against another, and the players were very rough. Many of the players were injured and occasionally one

-3-

would be killed. They often used their ball sticks for clubs to beat each other. There was heavy betting on the game. They would bet horses, wagons, cattle, beads, and I have even seen the women pull their dress and mocassins off and bet them.

The players wore only breech clouts with squirrel or cow tails attached and they wore mocassins on their feet. They drank hot coffee to make them sweat, so nobody could hold them, and greased themselves with axle grease. Their faces were painted with poke-berry juice. Some of the women got small branches of trees and ran about whipping the men on their bare legs and backs, often knocked down and trampled whooping and yelling as they did so. These women were in the fray, but they always arose with a whoop, and went after their men again with their switches.

The enmity became so great between Tobucksy County and San Bois County that Governor Green McCurtain issued a proclamation prohibiting different counties from competing with each other in these games. They could play ball in their own county, but not with players from other counties.

I served as a juror at the old court ground at Red Oak in the Choctaw Nation when a young man was sentenced to be whipped for stealing a yearling. He appeared on the day set. Two men took him by the arms, pulling them around a post. The sheriff did the whipping. They gave him only thirty licks. This was done with white hickory switches. There was a pile of these switches nearby, and when one switch frayed and frizzled out at the end it was thrown away and a new one taken from the pile.

I saw another young man receive ninety nine licks for stealing for the second time. He fainted several times. The men who were doing the whipping revived him and stood him up again to receive the rest of his punishment.

I attended a Green Corn dance in the Creek Nation. This was a medicine dance. They took medicine made of herbs which they gathered and boiled all day to make a tea. Then they fasted. Then they danced and feasted for two days. The women wore terrapin shells filled with gravel tied around their ankles. On the afternoon of the second day each one danced alone. There was a man sitting

on a platform, who was the Chief of the Green Corn Dance. They saluted him, singing a doleful song. He had a long handled gourd with a rock in it, with which he beat a tattoo. They danced around him, and as each dancer came in front of this chief he or she saluted him.

At night both men and women danced around a camp fire and the H. H. Chief did not occupy his seat on the platform.

I began preaching in 1892. I did missionary work for which I received no pay. I strapped my saddle riders to my saddle and got on my horse each Saturday morning to go to an appointment for service to last through Sunday.

The first couple I married was a run-away pair from the Creek Nation. They awakened me after midnight. It was a cold frosty night in the fall. The girl was barefooted and bareheaded. They had no license, and I wrote a statement that they had been married by me near Scipio.

I served on the jury in the litigation over the townsite of McAlester. When the Rock Island railroad

-8-

was built through the Choctaw Nation, crossing the Katy at McAlester, two men who were intermarried citizens name Fritz Sittle and Henry Trout claimed the land which was selected as the townsite. Each claimed that he was the rightful owner, and a big lawsuit ensued. This was won by Trout after a period of eight days in court. There were five attorneys on each side, among whom were Jerry Folsom, Joe Gardner and Mr. Yendell.

I enrolled with the Dawes Commission at McAlester about 1900. I was required to produce my marriage certificate as proof of intermarriage, before they would place me on the rolls. I filed on my land at Tishomingo. My allotment was in Murray County. I moved here in 1906 and have lived here continuously since.