

CRAWFORD, MARVIN W.

INTERVIEW

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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
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Interview with Marvin W. Crawford,
Washington, Oklahoma.

I was born August 13, 1883, to Choctaw Indian parents in Arkansas, but was brought to the Indian Territory at the age of two years, in 1885, by my parents. We settled in the Chickasaw Nation, some eighteen miles northwest of where the town of Ardmore is now.

There were no roads or towns except a few small ones - Stonewall, Lehigh and Tishomingo.

We soon moved to the Choctaw Nation as my mother was a Choctaw and was anxious to live among her own tribe of people. So I grew up among the Choctaw Indians and have always been more or less affiliated with the Choctaws.

The people of the Choctaw tribe worked very little. We didn't need to work, for game was plentiful, such as turkey and deer and all kinds of smaller game and fish abounded in all the streams. Usually each family raised a small patch of corn which was called Tom Fuller.

The Choctaw boys were taught how to shoot their bow at an early age. All pains were taken in the training

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of a youth as to the position of his bow, also the steadiness and aim for accurate shooting. After a boy had been given instructions in position of bow, manner of approach and accuracy of aim, he was allowed to go on short hunting trips. This would be continued until he brought in his first turkey or deer, after which he was received with honors and praise and was declared a marksman of the tribe.

The big hunting trips of the Spring and Fall were never practiced among the Choctaw tribe. There was no use of long trips for we had plenty of game at home and the tribe never did care to kill any more game than was necessary for actual home consumption. Of course, home meat was cured or dried for future use in case the family tired of fresh meat.

A deer would be killed and carried home on the back of its captor. There it was dressed and then swung from the branch of some small tree which would be some three to four feet above the ground. Then a small fire was built beneath the carcass that was never allowed to burn except at a very low degree, the meat being cured by the heat and smoke.

The principal woods used for curing purposes were hickory or bois d'arc, the hickory giving the meat a sweeter and better

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flavor than did the Bois d'arc, Hickory was, therefore, the more frequently used for this purpose.

Among the Choctaw tribe in case of sickness most all medicines were home-made from herbs, such as senna weed, broom weed, snake root and blood weed. These were gathered by members of the tribe and prepared mostly in the form of a tea. However, sometimes a form of powdered herbs was used which was known only to few of the tribe and were blown into the face of the patient.

I attended school first at an Indian Institution thirty-five miles east of Tishomingo known as the Tishoptok Academy. Later, I attended another school, three miles southwest of Hugo, known as Goodland Institute. The children were sent to these schools and were boarded for the term of school.

At Goodland Institute a Mrs. Moses kept the boarding house. She was the wife of Governor Moses, who at one time was Governor of both the Choctaw and Chickasaw tribes.

I now live five and one-half miles northwest of Washington, where I have lived for a good many years.