

## INDEX CARDS:

Cherokee emigrant  
Cherokee Nation  
Flint District  
Civil War  
Fort Gibson  
Smallpox  
Old Settlers  
Living Conditions  
Foods  
Indian Medicine  
Refugees  
Bushwhackers  
Cherokee Politics  
Allotment  
Flint Court House  
Punishment

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW:

7537

FIELD WORKER GUS HUMMINGBIRD  
Indian-Pioneer History S-149  
September 14, 1937.

INTERVIEW WITH BLACKBIRD DOUBLEHEAD  
Stilwell, Oklahoma  
Born December, 1848, Flint District  
Cherokee Nation.

Father's name, Adam Doublehead  
Mother's name, Charlotte Doublehead

Blackbird Doublehead, a fullblood, was born in Flint District, the Cherokee Nation, in December, 1848. His father was Adam Doublehead and his mother was Charlotte Doublehead, both fullblood Cherokees and North Carolina emigrants who came to the Cherokee country in 1838. The Doublehead family settled in a community now known as Cherry tree about five miles south of the town of Stilwell.

The Doublehead family, when they left their eastern home, consisted of three children, namely: Emma, the oldest child who died somewhere on the road west of the Mississippi. The next child was a boy who lived several years after they came here. This boy grew to manhood and was murdered by two Cherokees in a drunken brawl near the present home of Ed Paden now about three miles southeast of Stilwell.

## 2

The next child was a girl. She grew to womanhood at home in the Flint District. At the beginning of the Civil War she was living with a man. The man enlisted in the Union Army and was killed in some battle. The woman and child went to Fort Gibson. They took the black smallpox while there and both died. They are buried somewhere in the neighborhood of Fort Gibson. Blackbird Doublehead's father served through the Civil War in the Union Army.

Blackbird Doublehead is now about ninety years of age. But the Dawes Commission Roll states his age at eighty three. He now lives with his granddaughter, Mrs. Sam Bunch, about five miles south of Stilwell on Highway 59.

Mr. Doublehead says the first home they owned was a small place just about two miles south of where he now lives. After 1853, when the John Ross faction of Cherokees was given a payment, his father bought a claim from a man who had been here ten years before the coming of the emigrants. Mr. Doublehead remembers the deal made by his father and this old Cherokee settler.

## 3

There were several families who lived in this community of old settlers, but they soon moved away when the emigrants came to live among them. For several years the old settlers and the emigrants did not get along with each other. The emigrants did not like the old settlers because they had listened to the Ridges and Boudinots who favored Removal. For this reason the emigrants all sold their claims and moved away. The family from whom the Doubleheads bought their claim moved to Honey Creek which is now Delaware County.

## EARLY LIFE

Most of the early life of Mr. Doublehead was spent on a small farm which his father operated just about a quarter of a mile from where he now stays. When this interview was made Doublehead was in an old field in which he used to work before the Civil war. This interview was written about ten yards from the place where he first saw wheat threshed.

The farm which they bought from the old settler consisted of about ten acres. The principal crop was

4

corn. At that day and time there was not a mill in this part of the Cherokee Nation. So most of the milling was done at home. There were no teams, that is, no horses or mules. Most of the ground was broken with a hoe. Instead of breaking the soil, they just dug holes in the virgin land about three feet apart and planted their corn. Very few acres of corn were planted among the Cherokees, but the yield was great and it did not take so much corn to do a family for a year as it does now.

The old timers or those who came from the east usually planted about three acres of corn. They did not build barns, they just had small log pens called cribs. The three acres of corn usually produced about a hundred bushels.

#### THINGS USED FOR FOOD

Corn was the principal food of the Cherokees at that time. It could be used for food in many ways. Meal was made at home in the old time with mortars made out of logs and sometimes out of rocks. The corn

5

was first skinned in ashes. After the skin was taken from the corn it was put in this mortar and beaten with a long pole that was made to fit the bowl which was shaped of the mortar. This process made meal. The only trouble was that this had to be done for every meal. You could hear these mortars at all the homes of the Cherokees just at daylight every morning. People did not eat as much bread then as they do now.

Hominy was made from corn but this is not the same hominy that we now have. This hominy was called Ga-Naw-Han-Na and this dish was prepared by skinning the corn, then cracking this skinned corn to about four pieces to every kernel, then they would set this up for a day or so. This corn was then cooked until done on a slow fire. Plenty of soup was left with it. Then, this was left covered until it turned sour. This was the chief food for the sick.

Wild meat was another chief food of the early day Cherokees. There were plenty of deer, wild-turkey,

## 6

squirrel and other small animals, but the flesh of turkey and deer was their chief meats. Deer were so plentiful at that time that it was difficult to raise a crop under a bad fence. Deer went in droves all over the hills. Turkeys would eat up all the peas in the fields. There were all kinds of fur-bearing animals in this country but there was no sale for furs as we have now. Sometimes the Cherokees would go hunting and stay for several days. There were no buffalo in this part of the country. One buffalo has been seen in the hills east of Bunch. Wolves went by dozens. The streams were full of fish.

## INDIAN MEDICINE

Before the Civil War there was not a white doctor known to the Cherokee people, that is to that faction of the Cherokees who came to the Cherokee Nation. Most of the doctoring was done by the Medicine Men of their tribes. Many of these men were to be found at that time.

7

There were several medicine men in this district and in the Sequoyah District who did their doctoring. But there were not so many different kinds of diseases among the Cherokees then. Fever was not known, that is fevers such as we now call pneumonia, typhoid and malaria.

The only diseases that were common among the Cherokees were chills, headaches, pellagra and consumption which we now call tuberculosis. The last named was the most dreaded. They claimed this disease could be cured and it has been cured by this old method of doctoring.

To cure this disease the patient had to agree to several rules, that is to avoid eating too much or allowing other people to contact him, observe the signs in the moon and to be sure not to allow any person to enter the room in which he was.

To remain healthy each child was taken to the springs each month for four mornings before the sun came in sight. Many Cherokees believe in that doctrine to this day. They took a bath each morning winter and summer.



## CIVIL WAR

The Civil War started in the Cherokee Nation when Mr. Doublehead was about twelve years old. He still lived on the same farm on which his father settled when he came from the east. For several months before the war really began in the Cherokee Nation there were rumors of war.

Many representatives of the North and the South came before the real beginning of the war. Their representatives tried to induce the majority of the Cherokees to favor their side of the question. So, at last a man whose name in Cherokee was Dirteater, called a meeting of the Cherokees who lived in the community and the surrounding territory for several miles at a place called the "Mounds" which was located on the south side of the mountain, that is on the east side of the present Indian church of Cherry Tree, just about a mile north of the famous Candy Mink Springs where so many Kee-Too-Wah meetings have been held.

Blackbird Doublehead's father took him to one of these meetings. The principal speaker was a man named in Cherokee "Cyclone." They discussed what business they had in this

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-10

gathering corn; they took their horses and killed one of the little boys who was about ten years old. This boy's father had enlisted in the army with my father. His name was Tony Leach. The other boy was shot but he got well; they did not do anything to the woman but they took the corn that was gathered in the wagon and the horses. There were about twenty of these scouts.

These acts of the Southern men were reported to Fort Gibson and an army of Home Guards was sent to this part of the Cherokee Nation. This army camped west of the present town of Stilwell, about where the New Hope Cemetery is now located. Blackbird's father, Adam Doublehead, was a member of their Home Guards and at one time Blackbird and his mother went to the camp and stayed two nights with his father. When this army left, they went south through the Lee's Creek country, but they found no Confederates in the Cherokee country.

After the Federal Army left the Flint District a small part of the Confederate Army passed through the Flint District coming from the south. This army numbered about one hundred men. The men that did not take either

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537 - 9

war. Some claimed at this meeting that they would be forced later to enter into this war on one side, either North or South. At that time most of the old settler Cherokees had moved out of the country. So at the last meeting the Cherokees of this part of the country agreed to favor the North. So the meeting place for these Cherokees was to be at the home of this Cherokee named "Cyclone," on Greasy Creek. About fifty men from around this country went there. Sequoyah District sent about one hundred to this place and they all started for Fort Gibson to enlist in the Union Army. Blackbird Doublehead went in this bunch.

Blackbird Doublehead does not remember what time of the year it was when they left their homes for the army, but it was not very long after they left until the Confederate Scouts came to the Indian country pillaging homes and farms and carrying away everything. Then the Cherokee women and children were forced to go to the woods for protection. Things became very serious among the women and children in this part of the country.

The scouts of the Confederates came to the farm now owned by Sam Starr and caught a woman and two small boys

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-11

side were called bushwhackers; there were several of them in the Flint District. These men gathered at a place now called Paden Springs and formed a small army numbering about fifty men. They met this detachment of Confederates in an old field just three miles east of Paden Springs toward the Little Lee's Creek and fought a battle there which lasted only a short time. These bushwhackers were outnumbered and fled. There were about ten or twelve men killed in this battle.

In this battle, a man named Johnson was killed. He belonged to the Union Army. He was at this called meeting of the bushwhackers at Paden Springs. He was sent there by the United States Government to make an agreement with these men to join the Union Army. These men were not slackers as we call men now who would not go into the army. They were hiding around to protect the homes of some of the men who were fighting. But the government wanted them to join with the other men stationed at various places.

After this battle, the Cherokees realized that war was getting close to home and the women and children were promised rations if they would come to a place near Fort Gibson. So the women of this community went there.

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-12

Many other women, wives of the Northern men, were there also. They all camped about a mile to the east of the Fort. That must have been in 1861. These women remained at Fort Gibson for about a year and a half. Blackbird's sister died at Fort Gibson with the black smallpox and is buried there. This disease came through the Cherokee Nation in 1862 in the months of June, July and August. This was one of the worst diseases ever to hit the Cherokee Nation. People died by the hundreds, and graves could be found just everywhere on the hills. The Cherokee women would dig shallow graves and bury their dead.

While Blackbird was at Fort Gibson he became acquainted with several army officers stationed at that place, but he does not know their names in English. Among these army officers was Captain Cussie Seabolt from the Sequoyah District. A Cherokee by the name of Cloud was also a captain. Here is a list of Cherokees whom Blackbird knows: Huckleberry Flute; this man Flute lived on Sugar Mountain in what is now Cherokee County. Captain Leaf lived on Dry Creek, also in Cherokee County. Captain Jumper

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-13

lived in Delaware County; Captain Bounds also lived in Delaware County. Money Stealer was also a captain; he lived at Fort Gibson. Captain Vann was from the Flint District, his home was on Starkiller Mountain in what is now south Adair County. His father served under Captain Vann and was in only one battle.

#### Politics.

Soon after the Cherokees learned the importance of elections they formed two major parties; the National Party and the Downing Party. Most of the men who belonged to the National Party were those who served in the Northern Army. The Downing Party was made up of those who favored the South. The old grudge that the Cherokees had against one another was renewed in this war. For most of the treaty Cherokees favored the South, that is the Ridges and the Boudinots. Standwatie Boudinot, the nephew of Elias, was a Confederate General in the war. He was the man who caused most of the Treaty Party Cherokees to join the South.

At the treaty of 1839, as told to Blackbird, this hatred was mentioned but an effort was made for these Cherokees to become friends as they had been back in the

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-14

east before the removal. They were to bind themselves as a Union forever, but in this war the Southern representatives induced Standwatie Boudinot to join the South. The Ross Cherokees went with the North. In the same way the two factions differed in politics. Doublehead says as long as there are three Cherokees alive in the United States, they will never forget this hatred.

#### Allotment.

As mentioned before, this division of the Cherokees caused the Allotment law to pass. When the Downing Party controlled the Cherokee Legislature for one time they passed this law without the approval of the majority. Mr. Doublehead was a janitor at Tahlequah when this law was passed.

He could tell that most of the members of the legislature at that time were mixed breed Cherokees. There was more white blood in the room of Council Men when this law was passed. The vote was tied for several days when this election was held. But finally, two Downing Party men voted for this allotment. No doubt they were paid for their vote. These Eastern men who were present at this election tried to buy the votes of two men for the Allotment law. These

DOUBLEHEAD, BLACKBIRD, INTERVIEW.

7537-15

men were from St. Louis. The President of the United States knew that this was not a fair election. When the protest against this election reached him, he issued a proclamation calling for another election. At this election they bought the "Night Hawk" Society of Cherokees and were successful in inducing them not to vote. The leaders of this clan all received the best land in the Cherokee Nation. But those who thought they were doing their duty in not voting received the flint piles of eastern Cherokee Nation. Now these "Night Hawks" know how they were deceived by their leaders.

#### Courts and Court House.

Flint Court House was located about four miles south of the present town of Stilwell. This was also their voting precinct. Blackbird Doublehead saw two men hung at this place; one was a boy named Faldridge who was executed for killing his wife. The other was a Cherokee named Wa-Lou-Kee, who had killed a boy named Sanders.