

ELAPOSHABKE, ELIZABETH

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Johnson H. Hampton  
Interviewer  
August 31, 1937

Interview with Mrs. Elizabeth Elaposhabee  
Born in 1867, Smithville, Oklahoma.  
Mother-Sakia  
Father-Potobbee

I was born near what is now Smithville sometime in 1867. I don't know what day nor the month I was born but I have been told by parties that I was born in that year.

When I was born there was no Smithville, there were no store there, the country was wild and all in the woods, and mountains.

My father's name was Potobbee and my mother's name was Sakia; they had no other names; they were reared in Red River county which is now McCurtain County, they were married there, they then moved to where Smithville is now where I was born. They then moved to near McAlester at that time I have been told that there was no McAlester there then; they lived there until their death.

I was reared there and after I got grown I left there and came to what is now known as Honobi, the post office

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has been moved from there now, that is the place where I am living now.

My grandfather's name was Pisachina he had only one name; I don't know what my grandmother's name was. They lived on Red River which is now McCurtain County. They came from Mississippi and located in this county and lived there until their death; they told of how they moved to this country and what hardships they had, but I don't remember what they said about it for it has been a long time ago.

My father was in the Civil War. He never held any office under the Choctaw Government that I know of, he was just a full blood Indian.

We had about five acres of land in cultivation that we worked. We raised corn that is about all we raised in the field, and we had a garden that we raised some garden vegetables for summer eating; we did not know anything about canning so we did not can any vegetables for winter use; the men did not work much in those days so we women had to do the working in the field; sometimes

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we would give a working and get some of the neighbors to come and help out on the farm; the garden we worked ourselves.

I was enrolled by the Dawes Commissioners at Antlers. It was Indian Territory yet but as to what year I don't know; then after a few years we went to Atoka then Indian Territory to select our land. It was a long way from my home to Atoka; it took us several days to get to Atoka; it took us about three weeks to go there and file our land and get back home.

I have been told that my father used to trade at Fort Smith, Arkansas; he would yoke up the oxen and go. It would take him about two or three <sup>weeks</sup> to make the trip; he would bring back flour, sugar and coffee but we did not eat them only on Sundays, for it was such a long trip to go get the groceries that we had to be saving with the groceries that he had to buy.

We had corn to make our meal so we ate more meal than anything else. The meal was made by putting the

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corn in a mortar and beating it until it was made into meal, that was the way all the Indians made their meal. They did not have a grist mill in that country at that time and the only way to get corn meal was to beat it in this mortar I just spoke of.

My grandmother had a spinning wheel and a loom; she would spin the cotton into threads and then she would put this into the loom and make cloth. I have worked at it myself. She would wait until night to run the spinning-wheel and loom so I had to stay up and turn the wheel by hand and when she got the threads made into cloth, she would then get out in the woods and dig up some roots of different kinds and boil them down and then set the dye out and let it cool before she would use it. She used some bark roots and some other things that I don't remember now, and she would make the cloth blue, red, black and white. The cloth would look good too when she got through with it. She then would sell the cloth she made; she would make us

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some socks and mittens for the winter.

My grandmother used to make baskets, small ones and larger ones and then she would make some sifters for the corn husk. She would get some young cane and then split it, put it into some water and soak it for about a day then she would weave the cane into baskets. She sold these baskets to other Indians who wanted to buy them. I helped her to make several baskets but since she died I have not made any more baskets.

I saw several ball games but I don't know what county played the games. The women and men would bet on the games, I bet on some of them and one time I lost. I had bet on the game with another woman, and lost my dress I had on and had to go home in my underwear. They used to bet everything they could, and of course some of them won. They had some fights in the game; they did not fight much in some games but if the betting was very heavy they sure did the fighting. I saw a man killed in one of the games, and lots of them were bruised up. After the game they would take the <sup>s</sup>one who were hurt home and

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docter them up and when they got well they were ready for another game.

Back in the mountains where I lived for these many years, there used to be lots of wild game, deer, turkeys, and lots of fish in the creeks. It was on the banks of the river where I lived and you could go out and catch all the fish you wanted in a little while, and deer were plenty. The men would go out from their homes and kill what deer they wanted; they did not go out camping to get what deer they wanted or turkeys either. I never knew of Indians going hunting; an Indian would go from home and come back in a little while with a deer on his back.

The Ojotaw Indians still have our camp meetings, but they have quit having their cries. Since the white people came into the country they don't have any more cries like they used to. I guess they are like the white people when they get one buried they forget him.

I never attended school in my life and I am not able to speak or read or write in English, I can't speak a word of English, I am without an education; where I was

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raised there was no school that I could attend.

I am just a full blood Choctaw.

All of my kinfolks were full blood Choctaw Indians, and I have lived among my own tribe for these many years, and now I am getting old and I don't think that I will stay here very much longer. I am a Six Town Clan they say; all full bloods are the same and they are right now very clannish in their ways.

I am living about forty miles northeast of Antlers.