

BYACHAHUBEE, POLLY .

INTERVIEW

6736

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Johnson H. Hampton,
Interviewer.
July 14, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Polly Eyachahubee.
Snow, Oklahoma.

I was born August 1, 1871, in Kiamichi County, Choctaw Nation, east of what is now Grant, Oklahoma. My father's name was Isham Peters, and my mother's name was Elizabeth Peters. I don't know what her maiden name was. My grandfather's name was Gilbert Collins, and my grandmother's name was Cynthia Collins.

I don't know whether my father came from Mississippi or not; neither do I know whether my mother came from there or not. My mother was of Cherokee Indian blood. She lived somewhere near where my father lived. I don't think that she ever lived with the Cherokee Indians when my father married her, and I don't know whether my father was in the Civil War. If he was, he never said anything about it nor he did not tell us anything about the War. Of course we heard about the war but from other parties and not from my father.

My grandfather and grandmother came from Mississippi. When they arrived here they located east of what is now Grant, Oklahoma. There was no store nor post office then. After they died, then my father lived near where my grandparents lived before they died; in fact, we lived near

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there until I was grown and married. My father and mother died there and were buried there at home, for there was no cemetery to bury them, so they were buried at the house like all other Indians were buried at that time.

We had a small farm that we cultivated. We raised all the corn we needed for our bread, for that was about all the use we had for corn for we did not feed any of the stock any corn at that time.

We had good many cattle, hogs and ponies. They ran out in the woods and out on the range where they got all the grass they wanted, and out in the cane. It was not far from Red River bottoms. In the winter the stock would run there and in the summer they would come out in the hills. The grass stayed green all winter so we did not have to feed the stock at all. All the Indians that lived in our community had stocks. Of course they were not worth much, as there was no market for them, but we would sell a few of them for what we could get in order to buy some groceries with.

We raised plenty of corn for our bread. We used to put the corn in a mortar or Tom Fuller block, and beat it until it got fine grain just like meal we have now; then we would put it in some jar and let it sour; then we would

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bake it, which we called sour bread. Then we would make bread out of meal that was not soured which we called cornbread. When the corn got hard we would grit it for bread. We made the gritter out of tin by punching holes through it with a big nail; make it rough on one side, then nail it to a board so it would be steady. Then we would grit the corn and make cornbread that way. We would make hominy by the same way.

Mother had a spinning wheel and a loom. She would spin cotton into threads and then she would put this thread in the loom and weave it, where she would make cloths for dresses. She would make jean pants out of the cotton. She would knit woolen socks and mittens out of wool. We had a few sheep for our wool. We would shear the sheep in the early summer and keep it until the winter. She would card it just like she did the cotton and then she would spin the wool, then she would put it in the loom just like she does cotton, then she would make socks and mittens out of the wool. She used to go out in the woods and get some roots that she made dye out of but I don't remember what they were. Anyway, she used to dye the cloth she made and it would look store-bought, not as nice looking as store-bought but it was just as good.

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I never saw anyone make any pottery but I used to see the pottery after they were made. We had some of them ourselves. They were used to put hominy in. We had one or two that would hold about one gallon of hominy and had some smaller ones. I sure do wish I had saved one or two of them. I could have, but I didn't think to save any of them for a keep-sake. Then we had horn spoons made out of cow horns which we used in eating hominy, I don't see any of them now.

Our trading post was at Paris, Texas. We traded there for several years. It was not far to Paris from where we lived, so we went there to get our groceries. After several years an inter-arrived man by the name of Robert Jones put up a store in our neighborhood and called it Bee Hill. We traded there with him for several years, and when the Frisco Railroad came through and small towns began to be established, we went to Grant for our groceries. This man Jones began to clear up the bottom along the Red River. He finally had a big farm and it is still known as the Jones farm. It is a big farm. He has been dead for several years.

I never saw an Indian war dance nor the scalp dance. I have heard of them but I never saw any of them. Town

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where I lived they did not have those dances that I know of. They did have dances that I went to but they called it the Virginia Reel or something like that, I don't know what it is called, only what they called it.

I never saw an Indian ball game. I used to hear of them, but I did not get to go to any of them, I heard that it was a pretty hard game. They would fight from the start until the game was over.

The nearest church was a Presbyterian Church at Old Goodland. We would go there to attend the meeting. It was a camp meeting. The Indians would camp there and feed the people that came to the church. They sometimes would have a "cry"; that is, if some Indian had died they would have his memorial preached, then they would all cry. This would be on Sunday when their cry would be had. This church has been turned into a school and it is a big school now, run by the Presbyterian Church. I think that it is a sectarian school now run ^{by} the Presbyterian Church. Lots of Indian girls and boys attend this school.

When I was growing up we had no school in our neighborhood so I did not go to school at all, so I am without an education. I can speak a little English, just what I have picked up, but I can't read nor write English, nor can I

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read or write in Choctaw. If I had some education and
~~could remember the dates I might have been able to tell~~
~~you some things that I have omitted in this story.~~

I am not a fullblood Choctaw Indian. My father was
an Indian. He was a Choctaw but my mother was a part
Cherokee. They were not fullbloods, but I don't know
what degree of Choctaw blood I am, but I have lived with
the Choctaw Indians all of my life.

I am now living about one mile from Snow post office
about twenty-five miles northeast of Antlers, Oklahoma.

NOTE:- Johnson Hampton gives quite accurately the Indian
phraseology when interviewing the Indian Pioneers
and no change to more correct English is made in
his manuscripts. -Editor.