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FISH POND (RV-RO KVL-THA-THO KUL-KA)

An interview with the town chief (tulwa mekko),
Elmer Hill, Okemah, Oklahoma.

Billie Byrd, Field Worker

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The group known as the Fish Pond tribe (tulwa) of the Muskogees was organized back in the Coosa River country of Alabama prior to their coming to the new country. The Fish Pond tribe were descendants from the Ok-cha-i tribe of the Muskogees which was an ancient tribe. They reorganized when they reached their new or permanent place of settlement-- eight miles southwest of Okemah. Now, the descendants of this group are scattered over the country and live at their different homes.

Whatever customs were followed in their old homes were still strictly enforced in their new homes. Many customs of the old Indians have been told, yet there are still some that never have been told.

There was always the age-old custom of the tribal medicine and the tribal medicine man ever present in the veryday life of a tribe.

At every appearance of the new moon the men took medicine internally to thus cleanse the person and keep him immune from illness and ill-fate. The women who were sick were not allowed to take the medicine or mingle amongst the men. They were not

allowed to eat out of the same dishes or even tread on the paths that the men traveled. They had separate rooms to confine the women until their time was over. If this mingling of men and women existed, the men lost their strength, poor eyesight resulted, and other numerous defects.

The herbal medicine prepared by the medicine man was often sprinkled in the rooms to ward off the causes of illness and even the house and premises underwent the sprinkling process.

The medicine is prepared by means of different weeds, branches, and many unbelievable objects placed in water. The medicine man further prepares it by blowing into the water through a hollowed stick or reed and then saying or singing a sort of a chant. It is not known to this day where this custom originated.

When a person becomes ill, a handkerchief or some part of his clothing is taken to a prophet. The prophet has this particular article in his view whereby he diagnosis the cause of illness. Many times he gives causes with such meanings as illness from dogs, cats, birds, wolves, turtles, many snakes, and many other inconceivable subjects. He further tells the different herbs to be used for any particular illness, often signifying a particular medicine man to prepare this. The finished medicine may be hot, warm, or cold. One herb is all-prevalent in these different prepared medicines known as Micco Hoyanecha (Passing King). It was always been abundant, but

it is rapidly disappearing.

This tribe of Fish Pond was very strict in enforcing their tribal laws and customs. They kept a record of all births and deaths. They had their customary chief (micco) who called their special meetings. Every member was required to be present. A member not responding was fined one dollar. This money was turned over to the Muskogee--Creek national treasury to defray the expenses incurred by the light horsemen, a select body of peace officers. A meeting called for the specific purpose of announcing a particular work and same member not being present was fined one dollar or less. This money was turned over to the Muskogee-Creek national treasury to defray the expenses of children of a deceased officer of the light horsemen. The aid was given only to children of such officers. There was a committee of three appointed by the tribal chief (tulwa micco) whose duties were to make the necessary division of property among the children or heirs of deceased officers of the light horsemen.

There was a certain time of the year when no sort of fire was built especially during the windy months, the law being strictly enforced and observed. If a fire was started and the wind blew the fire along and accidentally burned some property of a neighbor or other people, the person starting the fire had to replace the property burned.

After the permanent settlement of the Fish Pond tribe was established and time passed, a crude and ordinary square building was constructed of logs for the tribal business meet-

ings and this building was and is near the ceremonial grounds of the present Fish Pond town, Section 30, township 11, range 9.

The present chief (tulwa micco) of the Fish Pond town is Elmer Hill, the nephew of Amos Hill, who served as captain in the Light horsemen. No further information available about Amos Hill.

The custom of the dance, the medicine, and the other strict tribal laws have almost been abolished. The customs are still tried to be followed with less observance of the strict laws and less regard of customs.