

SELFIDGE, JENNIE.

MAYHEW CHURCH & COURT GROUNDS.

819

SELFRIDGE, JENNIE.

MAYHEW CHURCH.

8089.

Jennie Selfridge,
Field Worker,
July 13, 1937.

MAYHEW CHURCH AND COURT GROUNDS.

Four or five miles northeast
Of Boswell, Oklahoma.

The old Mayhew church was located northeast of Boswell four or five miles. This church was established in 1836 by Cyrus Kingsbury, a Presbyterian.

This location was also used for a court ground. All that was left of the old original Mayhew was torn down in 1934. The first home, that of Kizzie Baptiste and Mrs. James, was also torn down. This home was the stage stop on the old Military Road.

The second location of the Mayhew court ground was just west of the present Mayhew school. To this location was moved the old steel jail house which Governor Jones built to put the Crowder gang in. This jail was first built on the Pushmataha court ground, which was located one-half mile east of the present town of Sunkist. The Duncan boys moved it to its present location in 1903.

The Crowder gang consisted of George, Bill, and Josh Crowder. Josh Crowder killed one of the Jones boys before

SELFRIDGE, JENNIE.

MAYHEW CHURCH.

8089.

-2-

Wilson Jones became Governor. Dick Locke, father of Victor Locke, also had trouble with the Jones family. They fought a battle in the church at Antlers, and using the words of Dr. Lynch, "the church was shot to thunder". About this time or a little later Tom Hunter ran for Governor of the Choctaw Nation and was elected. He was opposed to the Atoka Agreement, and when he went to take over the capitol at Tuskahoma the Department of the Interior sent troops down to keep him out. Solomon Homer finally stole the seal of the Choctaw Nation, and McCurtain was installed as Governor. The old steel jail is constructed of solid steel strips which are welded together. Outside of the steel structure is another structure of pine logs, and over this a frame structure. It would have been impossible for a person to have escaped from the jail. There was room in it for sixteen prisoners. The prison spaces were lettered from left to right, A, B, C, and on through to P, P being to the left of A. On the floor at each prison space there is a large steel ring welded into the wall, and a chain welded to this ring. In this manner the prisoners could be fastened hand and foot to the wall.

SELFRIDGE, JENNIE.

MAYHEW CHURCH.

8089.

-3-

The only opening is the door which is located in the west end of the jail. The jail is being used at the present time as a granary, and the inside is still in perfect condition.

Dr. Lynch has witnessed several whippings at the old court ground. The whipping tree has been cut down. It stood just a little south and east of the store and jail house. Judge Everidge, the Choctaw Judge, would some times adjourn court to play poker. Solomon Homer would usually defend the Indians. After the jury found a prisoner guilty of a crime the judge would instruct the deputy to lay on the lashes. One deputy stood on each side of the tree and held the prisoner, while ten men lay on the lashes. They were each given ten sticks, and the sheriff stood by to take up the sticks as they used them.

Comment; This court ground was visited by Jennie Selfridge in September of 1936. The remainder of the information was obtained from Dr. Charles Lynch, Federal Building Ardmore, who was a pioneer physician around Mayhew.

Field Worker.