

INDEX CARDS

Food--Choctaw
Farming--Choctaw Nation
Schools--Choctaw Nation
County government--Choctaw
Language--Choctaw
Medicine--Choctaw

Field Worker: Johnson H. Hampton
 April 26, 1937

STORY OF Isham Morris
 Corinne, Oklahoma

BORN June 18, 1880
 Jackfork County
 Near Tushkahoma, Okla.

PARENTS: Father, John Morris,
 Towson County, Choctaw
 Nation
 Mother, Cilian Morris
 Towson County
 Choctaw Nation

I was born in Jackfork County, Indian Territory, near what is now known as Tushkahoma, Oklahoma, on the 18th day of June, 1880.

My father's name was John Morris and my mother's name was Cilian Morris. They had lived in Towson County, that is what is now known as Choctaw County, and they moved to Jackfork County, where they lived when I was born, and they lived there until their death.

My father was not in the Civil War. I don't know whether he was too young or not. Any way he was not in the war.

My grandfather came from Mississippi, but he died before I was born so I didn't hear anything about how they got here or what they had to put up with in coming over to the new country.

-2-

5488

My mother used to make bread by putting the corn in a mortar and beat it until the corn was made into a meal--it would make a white meal. The corn they had was a hard flint corn and we raised a little of it for bread every year. It sure was a hard corn--our ponies would not hardly eat it for it was too hard for them. That kind of corn made the best meal; hominy, and other kinds of eats that were made out of corn. We don't have that kind of corn any more. And then we had a corn that was called Indian corn. It was white corn but soft, not as hard as the flint corn that was used for bread corn. Sometimes mother would grit the corn to make bread. The first thing she would do was to put this corn in a tub or in a kettle and soak it for two or three hours; then she had a gritter made out of tin which had holes in them made by a nail, and it was nailed on a board. She would grit the corn and get ready for breakfast or dinner just about as quick as she could bake the bread.

We had a little farm that we farmed but we would raise enough corn to do us for we did not have to feed our ponies much corn. They had plenty to eat out in the woods. The hogs got fat on acorns; we did not have to feed our hogs any corn at all. They would be fat when we wanted to kill a few. We would just go out in the woods and kill what we wanted to kill and let the others go until next winter. There were lots of deer, turkeys, fish and all other wild meat that we could get, so there was no use in killing very

many hogs to put up for winter.

I saw a spinnig wheel one time. There was an old woman running it when I saw it. She had carded some cotton and put the batts in a row, putting them in the spinning wheel some way--I don't know how she did it, but she made some threads out of the cotton and used it in making the children some socks and mittens. They were heavy socks made out of cotton. She told me that she used to make some clothes for the girls to wear but I didn' see the cloth she made.

I went to school at Jones Academy. That school was run by the Choctaw government; I stayed there for two years. That was all the time I was allotted by the County Judge. At that time the County Judge had the authority to put you in school for so many years according to age. The permission had to be obtained from him before you could go to school, so I just had two years. I finished my term and came back home and never did go to any other school. I can't read much English books nor write much English, and don't know how to speak English but very little, but I can write and read in my own language pretty well.

I am an Indian doctor. I have not practiced very much for when the white doctors got in here and after statehood they made a law that no one could practice medicine unless they had a license to do so. But I have practiced a little along, for

when the Indians get sick they send for me and then I go and do what I can for them. The Indians do not want to have a white doctor much--they don't like their medicine, so they send for me. I go and do what I can for them. I have not lost many patients during my practice. I used bark, herbs, roots, and leaves of certain kinds, may apple root, blackroot for stomach ailments, and several kinds of roots. I have different kinds of herbs and other things for different kind of sickness, and I have cured people that were given up by the white doctors. About pay, I get whatever they give me. I don't charge them anything but if they give me anything I take it. I sometimes make pretty good, not in money, but they give me a hog, or a pony, and sometimes I get corn and various things they so amind to give me.

Of course, being a full-blood Indian I have always lived with my tribe. My father and mother were both full blood Indians and the rest of my kinfolks are all full bloods.
