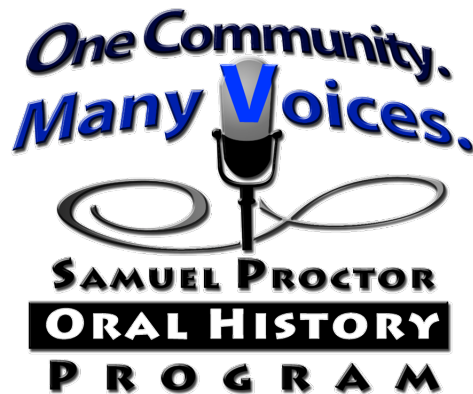


Baxter York

**Southeastern Indian Oral History Project
MISS CHOC-049**

Interview by:

**Lester Butard, Terry Davis, and Vernon Tubby
August 22, 1975**



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MISS CHOC 049 Baxter York
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16 minutes | 4 pages

Abstract: Baxter York describes the Tribal government and councils. He discusses how Choctaws can access benefits through the Tribal organization. He recounts the story of how the Choctaw got their name and describes how his ancestors farmed and lived. York then explains the historical relationship between the indigenous people and Whites in Mississippi, telling a story about Chief Pushmataha, who Choctaw ancestors believe was killed by Whites when he was in Washington, D.C. He describes how the Choctaw who did not relocate to Oklahoma were mistreated before sharing that he believes the Tribe's population will increase in the future.

Keywords: [Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Pushmataha; Mississippi--Choctaw; Tribal history; Land tenure]

SAMUEL PROCTOR
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MISS CHOC 049

Interviewee: Baxter York

Interviewer: Lester Butard, Terry Davis, and Vernon Tubby

Date of Interview: August 22, 1975

U: Today is August 22. The interviewers are Lester **Butard**, Terry Davis, Vernon Tubby.

Y: The organization of Tribal government were organized in 1945. In Tribal council is three of the communities, largest communities, had three Tribal council, and three of them have two Tribal council and one at Bogue Homa and one Tribal council. And Tribal council get elected by the people, and the Tribal council select a Chief or chairman. But right recently they changed the constitutions and bylaws and put in where the whole Tribe would vote for Chief, so it's that way now. And the organization is to help the Tribe become self-sufficiently while they are in this reservation. Tribal government is recognized by the Congress of the United States, and the Tribal council is supposed to negotiate and bring in some money for the operation. Also, the constitution bylaws that they have for the schools or any other benefit, that they have to have one half or more Indian blood in order to receive benefits. Then a man married to White spouse, White spouse automatically go with the man and would receive benefits. But the man is White and the women is a Choctaw married to a White, why, then she automatically receive benefits from the man's thing, so to speak. Those are the major things, although any Choctaws has gone to work in various cities not on this roll, why, then they can get on a roll, that is if he's from Mississippi. Also, the child's born outside, but also the door is open where they can come in and get on the roll and receive benefits. Choctaws are supposed to help themselves while the federal government are helping to get out of the poverty. That's the Tribal organization.

Where the Choctaws get their name? We gonna have to go back into Creator. Creator give all the Tribal name to the Indian people all over in the United States, and they shouldn't forget their culture and their language and their name because it's a rule of the Creator. That's not a man-made law, that's Creator's law, Creator's rule. So, they shouldn't forget their culture and language and their name. The Choctaw are **formed** by the Creator and they too have a culture, their language, and way of life.

[Break in recording]

Y: Back in our ancestors' time, Choctaws were recognized as agriculture people, and they raised nothing but corn and gathered wild potatoes and wild vegetables. That's what they used to live on. The women folks does mostly the planting of corn and the man was a hunter. And the mens go out and bring in the meat while the women folks at home raising the corn. That's the—our ancestors, the farming and living. The jobs that they carry, that was it. But Anglo race of people came here and introduced new form of government, new form of creating jobs, and so on by then. Nowadays they took up farming, they took up forestry, they took up industry, and some of 'em are working in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and some of 'em are working with the Tribal government. That's the picture on this farming and jobs. Now, I want put in a little bit on the relationship between the Whites and the reds. According to our ancestors, especially the grandmother. She was hundred and five years old when she passed away and she's one talkin' 'bout the relation between the Whites and the reds. First, the Whites were jealous because the Creator has create the land, the rich land and the rich resources in and

around Mississippi. They never show no hate until they invited Pushmataha, the great Chief that the Choctaw have, and he was a smart man and they wanted this land but they couldn't get it right then. And that became hate the Choctaw. They hate Choctaw leader. They say that when they invited him to Washington office, he eat so much 'til he died. Now, our ancestors has handed down to me that they didn't think, smart a man as he was, that he could eat so much that he died. So, by that, the hate that caused of White in Washington office give this Chief a poison food to get rid of him. And the little Chief, they say that they fall off a stairway in hotel and kill himself. And those things our ancestors believe that they kill them with some other things, that they didn't die, just fall off a stairway and that Chief Pushmataha didn't die for eating so much. So, they hate what's created among the White leaders during Jefferson and Johnson time. Now, it came along where the treaty between the government and the Choctaw in 1820 and 1830 and 1902 and [190]3. After the removal of those Choctaws, some Choctaws remained in Mississippi. So, the war department send two man up here in Mississippi and they came here and saw Choctaw still here. Then they said, "I thought you was supposed to be in Oklahoma. Now, are you still here?" Some of the Choctaws say that they didn't want to leave their ancestors because they were buried here, and also they didn't want to leave their original home. Well, it was a hate when those two men said this: "All right then. We're gonna take everything away from you, even your happiness." But Choctaws were still here in the hands of the landlord. Landlord use 'em almost like a slave, but not quite. They used 'em on cheap labor, furnished 'em a shotgun house, and gave

'em little food to eat. Well, while doing that, it was the hate that state legislature passed the law sayin' that any darker skin wouldn't testify against the White in the court. So, again, they were blocked out. They didn't have no way to be free at that time. Eventually, the government had to step in, sayin' in 1918 and say that we're gonna exchange hands. Federal government's hand from the landlord's hand. And they say you were deep in poverty. We gonna help you out of the poverty if you help yourself. So, Choctaws came through some of the harder bad treatment that any human beings could receive. But they're still here. They're increasing now, they're not decreasing. In the long run, I feel like the Choctaw will be so populated in many years to come. That's it.

[End of interview]

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