

Early days of this part of northern Cherokee Nation included the fuzz of the period, U. S. Marshall Bill Chaney. Chaney must have kept the peace well, as Mr. Scraper recalls no bad trouble. The main infractions of the law were the activities of the whiskey runners who came out of Missouri into Indian Territory. Shootings, bank robbery, and assorted types of crime seemed to have been contained in the Southwest City, Missouri, country, as many have told that early days of this frontier town left much to be desired for peaceful coexistence. To the north, Seneca, Mo. was an early day trading center, and not without its gamblers, highwaymen, gunmen and toughs as Mr. Scraper remembers.

He recalls farming in his early days was hard work. They raised good crops of corn and wheat, as well as sorghum cane. He recalls hauling wheat to the mill at Dodge and bring home a thousand pounds of flour. Old fashioned farm equipment did not ease their labors, and especially the old foot-feed hay balers, some of which were steam operated, and all dangerous to run.

He saw the first automobiles come into the country. These were small-tired, high wheel jobs with carbide lights. A man on horseback could easily outrun them in that hilly country before roads were improved.

People of his day in that district all seemed to live healthy lives, and sickness was a minor worry. Trained medical doctors were few and far between, and for the most part herb doctors and medicine men cared for the sick and ailing. The flu epidemic of World War I did not spare his community and Mr. Scraper helped bury many who died in those tragic days.

Both he and his father took their Indian land allotments along Honey Creek. They had rich tillable farm land and good pastures and hay land. They prospered for many years by much hard work, but eventually farm produce did not bring enough to keep them going. His father retired from farm work and lived out his days in his community. Thomas left the farm to try to make a better living.

He remembers his first home was a log house on Honey Creek built by his father. To help keep the family going he and his father would cut and hack railroad ties to sell at Seneca and Southwest City. He recalls that big heavy broad axe never seemed to get any lighter. He also made many clap board shingles. He would cut a two-foot section of red oak, and with a froe and mallet expertly slice off the roof covering of that long ago day.

Many miles to the south on the Illinois River was the little village of Scraper settled at the beginning of the Cherokee Nation by his grandfather. Time and progress has erased this old village, but the memory of those hardy settlers who helped built a great nation out of a wilderness remain sacred to-day.