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W. T. Holland, Interviewer.
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Interview with Charles Huckleberry Rogers
Bailey Hotel, West Tulsa, Okla.

I was born March 5, 1881, about three miles south-east of Claremore.

My father, Charles Rogers, was also a native of the Cherokee Nation and lived in the Coowee-Scoowee district, where he served as judge for about eight years. This land or district consisted of all lands west of the Grand River in the Cherokee Nation. The court house was on Dog Creek, about seven miles northeast of where Claremore now is.

My brother, W. C. Rogers, was the last Chief of the Cherokee Nation and was the first settler of Skiatook.

My father established a trading-post about two miles north of the present town of Skiatook, this was in 1880. Bill, or W. C. Rogers, my brother, took charge of the trading-post in 1884, upon the death of my father.

My first schooling was at West Point, southeast of Claremore. Miss Engram was our teacher. We had from

six to nine months of school, and the grades were first, second, third, fourth, and fifth. The Cherokee Government supported the school.

Later on, after the death of my parents, I lived with my brother, Bill, north of Skiatook where I went to school at the Quaker Mission. This mission was run by Johnnie Watson and his sister, Quakers, and very fine people. This school had its beginning on Bird Creek about two and a quarter miles north of the present town of Skiatook in a log building. This was in 1885.

Later on the Cherokee Nation gave the Watsons some land about two miles further north on a hill where a nicer and larger building was erected. This building still stands. The only requirement in exchange for the land was that the mission school should keep a few orphans. This they did, usually having from four to six orphan children all the time.

During the school term there were boarding pupils as well as day pupils, and white children could go as day pupils.

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Cattle raising and grazing were the main businesses about Claremore in my early days. Bill Star, Frank Rooker and John Crutchfield, Indians, were the most active men in this business, in the eighties.

John Derickson, a white man, was also very prominently connected with the cattle business.

All the country was open range then, except for the drift fences which were put up every eight or ten miles to keep the cattle within reasonable bounds.

Dock Dainey, a white man, was also an early cowman of that section.

This was after the railroad came in, and shipments were made by rail. Cattle and hay were about all that the railroads hauled. The passengers were carried in a coach attached to the rear of the freight cars. The train men were accommodating, as they would stop most anywhere and put off a passenger or take one on. I know one time down near the Verdigris River at Milltown, they stopped the train long enough for some

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passengers, who were hunters, to get off and hunt and kill some turkeys. The train men saw the big drove of turkeys and stopped so the hunters could get off and hunt awhile. They succeeded in killing quite a lot of turkeys.

I remember that Jake Bartles was the owner of the sawmill and store at Milltown. He, later, was the founder of Bartlesville, which was named for him. Most all sawmills had grist mills and would grind corn for the people.

Bartles was handling walnut timber then. He sawed out gun stocks from all the walnut he could get. Walnut was not used a great deal then for furniture, at least not in this section. Homemade wagons were used. These were drawn by oxen. Their wagons were made locally. The wheels were solid, a block about eight to ten inches thick and thirty inches in diameter, sawed from cottonwood, usually. They would have iron bands around them, and

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the axles would have iron or cast skeins. There were some fine walnut trees in this country then. I have seen logs five feet at the butt.

Tom Neal and Joe Blosser were the men who did most of the hauling. Practically all the timber cut above the mill was floated down on the Verdigris River to the mill.

My father was a farmer, also. He farmed two hundred acres or better, and raised wheat and corn, and usually had about two hundred head of range cattle.

It was easy to raise hog then. There was plenty of feed and the hog would be fat enough for meat in the fall. However, my father usually fed his hogs some grain before killing his meat.

We rarely ever had to feed the cattle any, even in the winter. My father always cut and put up quite a lot of prairie hay, so in the event of a severe winter he could feed his cattle. They would get into the cane-

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brakes and eat the green shoots, which made good grazing.

Our home, near Claremore, was built in 1870. It was a two story frame building.

The early day United States Marshals whom I remember were Gabe Beck, Ezra Bussey, Bud Teal and Bill Shipley were deputies. Claremore was headquarters for that district.

The laws of the Cherokee Nation were few but sufficient and were generally well enforced. All men were treated as equals under the law, as family standing didn't cut any figure in dealing out justice, as all were treated according to the merits of the case which was being tried. All our people were members of a society or association, known as the ^{*}Cotuwah Association. That is they banded themselves together for common protection and defense.

The Cherokee police were very effective in suppressing crime, as they were swift in action.

Our people attended stomp dances at the old Spybuck

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stomp grounds east of Sperry.

In my early days preaching was held in school buildings and in the homes of the people, and protracted meetings were held under brush arbors in the summer. I used to attend Sunday School at Catoosa.

I knew John Schrimshire, Ed. Sanders, Charles and Bill McClellan, East, John and Willis Chambers, all prominent Cherokee citizens of the Claremore section, and active in the affairs of the Cherokee Nation. Van Chambers and John Bullett were two other men who were prominent.

The old Chambers graveyard, three miles south of Claremore, is over fifty years old and contains the graves of quite a number of the prominent Cherokee people.

*Note: The Field Worker has Co-Tu-Wah, evidently referring to the Kee To° Wah Society.