SHIRLEY, A. J. INTERVIEW. 9059

Interviewer, Maurice R. Anderson,
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Interview with A. J. Shirley,
Maysville, Oklahoma.

Born July 3, 1861, Arkansas.

Parents Arion Shirley, Alabama.
Anna Cleveland, Alabama.

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I was born in 1861, in Arkansas. I came to the Indian Territory in 1886 and settled at a place called Postoak in the Chickasaw Nation.

I leased fifty acres of land and hauled the lumber from Denison, Texas, and built me a house and began farming. There was a gin and grist mill at Postoak, but there was no market for cotton at Postoak. I had to haul my cotton to Denison, Texas. That was also where I had to go to get what few things I had to buy. I did not have to buy many things. I raised everything we ate except meat.

There were plenty of deer, turkey, squirrel and rabbits and the woods were full of quail, but in that time a quail was too small a thing to waste a shell on.

In 1887 Postoak was changed to the name of Emmitt. I hauled the first load of lumber from Denison, Texas, to build a store at Emmitt. Later, I do not remember what year, Emmitt was again changed to the name of Milburn.

When I settled at Postoak the Chickasaw Indians held their Court at Tishomingo, the Capital of the Chickasaw Nation.

There were no railroads in that part of the country then, there were stage lines. There was a stage line from Caddo to Tishomingo and on north and west to Fort Sill. There was also one from Caddo to Denison, Texas.

I believe the Santa Fe Railroad built from Texas through the Chickasaw Nation in 1886. It was built north from Red River to Ardmore and on into where Oklahoma City is now.

The stage line was stopped from Caddo to Fort Sill in 1887.

I farmed at Emmitt until 1894. At that time I moved to old Ada in the northeast part of the Chickasaw Nation and leased a farm there.

At that time Jeff Reed had a general merchandise store and was the postmaster; the post office was in this store. He told me he established the post office in 1890 and Ada was named for his daughter, Ada Reed.

I have never gone to any of the Indian Stomp dances but I have been to their ball games.

In that day and time our main fun came once each year on the Fourth of July. At that time there would be a big picnic given, sometimes it would start a day or two before the Fourth and last three or four days after. The Indians would have a ball game each day and the white people would have a dance platform and there would be dancing all day and night. There would be a merry-go-round, pulled by a mule. It cost ten cents to ride the merry- o-round and by the time they got it stopped it would be loaded down again. It took two men to stop it and the mule had to be well trained, for if he happened to stumble and fall it would be too bad. I saw one mule killed. The music on this swing was furnished by a man who played the fiddle. He would play for his rides and when he got tired there was

always someone else to take his place.

The Indians in their ball games would only wear breech-clouts and go without hats, right in the hot sun. There would be a bunch of Indians from one county playing another bunch from another county. At that time the Chickasaw Nation was divided into four counties. They used sticks to throw the ball with and were not allowed to touch the ball with their hands. There would be a pole in the center of the ground and when one would throw the ball with the stick and hit the pole that counted one point for his side. I have seen them hit each other over the head with these sticks and someone would have to carry the injured person out.

When new Ada started to build I helped build the first building. New Ada was started in the middle of a large cotton field, in 1900. There was a gin there and the man who had bought this gin had failed to pay for it and the company that owned it had it closed down. That left the farmers in a bad condition with plenty of cotton to be ginned and the gin closed down. Jeff Reed came to me and wanted me to buy the gin, said the farmers owed him for groceries and he could not get his money until their cotton was ginned. I

told him I did not have enough money to buy a horse let alone a gin. He said I didn't need any money. He went on my note and I started in the gin business with about fifty dollars in money but at the end of that fall, after the cotton was all ginned, I had paid for the gin and also bought a saw mill and sawed all the heavy timber that was used in building New Ada.

I ran the gin and sawmill a few years, sold out and went into the grocery business at New Ada. I stayed in the grocery business until 1909; at that time I sold out and moved to Maysville and bought out a gin there. I have lived at Maysville, Oklahoma, since 1909.