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BEAMER, LEWIS.

INTERVIEW.

13136.

Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
Feb. 28, 1938.

An Interview With Lewis Beamer,
Moody's, Oklahoma:
OLD TRANSLATOR.

Lewis Beamer, a Cherokee Baptist preacher, living in the Moody's locality, ten miles north of Tahlequah, is among the oldest native born residents of Cherokee County, being in his eighty-fifth year at this time.

Mr. Beamer is not a full blood Cherokee, being probably of three-quarters Indian blood, to one-quarter of white blood. His surname indicates English ancestry on his father's side, but he is usually considered a full Indian. He is a widower, his wife, Mrs. Sallie Beamer, having died several years ago. In his youthful days he attended a school which was conducted at a place called Peavine, in the old Goingsnake District. The teacher of this school was the Reverend John B. Jones, for a number of years engaged in missionary work among the Cherokees. There were several young Cherokees who attended this school, but Lewis Beamer is said to

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have attended it more steadily and for a longer period of time than the others. Consequently he derived more book knowledge than that acquired by the majority of the native Cherokees, of the period extending from the late '60's into the early '70's of the last century.

Most of the lifetime of Mr. Beamer has been spent in rural sections. Unlike many of the full bloods, he took rather small interest in politics. He did not, as did many others, spend much time in seeking election to official positions, such as membership in their National Council, or to other places. Several years before the close of the Cherokee Government, however, he was appointed by the principal chief and confirmed by the National Council as Translator in the office of the "Cherokee Advocate".

The Translator was an important employe in the National printing office. In order to satisfactorily fill the position it was necessary that he be familiar with both the English and Cherokee languages. The editor, who was seldom familiar with the Cherokee language, wrote his articles in English and the translator

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then copied them in the Cherokee letters. And when articles, accounts of the acts of the Councils or other items, were received written in the Cherokee letters, the translator wrote them out in the English language. The copies, both English and Cherokee, were then turned over to the compositors to be set up in type.

While serving as translator Mr. Beamer spent most of his time in Tahlequah, as it was necessary that he be about the printing office during most of each week. One day while talking with some men in the printing office, Mr. Beamer remarked that he was able to sign his name in four languages, Creek, Latin, English and Cherokee:

It is possible that Mr. Beamer is the last surviving former translator of the "Cherokee Advocate", publication of which was suspended more than thirty years ago. It is probable that he has attained greater age than any former translator with one exception. That exception is James D. Wofford, the first translator, appointed in 1844. Like Mr. Beamer, a small

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and slender man, Mr. Wofford lived to the age of nearly ninety-one years.

Because of feeble health Mr. Beamer is seldom seen in Tahlequah, remaining principally at his home. When more active he was often present at the meetings of the Cherokee Baptist Associations. When in his usual health, a few years ago, he was able to recall and relate a variety of interesting anecdotes and incidents pertaining to long past years and to people of earlier years.