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Cushing, Okla
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I am one of the few pioneers who came into Oklahoma before the opening. I didn't officially live here until after the opening even though I worked as a cow-puncher in this territory long before then. The country in those days was a wide-open range. There were no fences at all in the Indian territory.

I had a good chance to pick out the strip of land I wanted in the run, and it was fairly easy for me to secure it. We lined up near Gilton (the Creek County line) and at the signal to go we were off. The land was extremely rough, and I marvel sometimes about how fast we got over the ground. Some of the men found the going too rough for them and their wagons, so they unhitched and traveled on their horses, leaving the families to find them as best they could. I had left mine at the starting point after telling them approximately where my acreage was. We had to ford the Cimarron wherever we came across it, and it was very dangerous because of the quick sand. Some bogged down, but I knew a safe place cross and didn't get into trouble.

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I finally located my land in the Cimarron Valley where it is now and staked my claim. Even though I had told my family where the land was, I feared that they could not find me.

Eventually they did.

Farming a homestead proved to be anything but a snap. The winters especially were severe. When it snowed we were bound to the house and lots, and could not go to the trading post for supplies. Often those winters there was no money for supplies, either, and we had to live on what we had raised or what wild game we could kill. Stray hogs were prevalent in the district also, and whenever the lard supply ran low one of these hogs became the victim of our guns. They ran in droves, and no one could tell whose hogs they were, and everyone helped himself. Besides the ordinary wild game, there were many deers, antelopes, cantamounts, and wild turkeys. All a person had to do to kill a turkey was to find out where they roosted, and kill them during the night.

The horses of the Indians had a hard time during those winters. It seems to me that it snowed more often and more severely in those days than it does now. The horses when they walked through the snow frequently left tracks with their bellies. Whenever it sleeted or the snow stayed on a long time, the Indians

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had to cut trees for the horses to nibble the barks off.

The ranchmen used the ranges for their cattle and horses. It was pretty dangerous to go around because of the bulls running loose. For every herd there was usually a bull. If two herds came together a fight often resulted. Then too, when there was more than one bull in a herd they often fought, too.

The average herd of horses ranged from fifty to ninety heads. As was the case of the cattle, each herd had one stallion or more. They were very dangerous, especially in the mating season. I remember a stallion owned by Chief Momowa. He was a beautiful, spotted, Arabian-type horse. One time he got into a fight with a stallion from a neighboring stallion. It was terrible, fascinating struggle. They kicked, rared up, bit, niggled each other until I thought they would kill each other simultaneously. Chief Momowa's stallion won and claimed the other's herd. This was always the way when two stallions fought. One was always killed or ran away, and the victor took his herd. This caused many disputes over the herds by the owners, and finally they started branding their horses so as to tell them apart. Other than these disputes, the Indians were neighborly with each other.

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Finally the M. K. and T. railroad started building a railroad through Oklahoma from Hutchinson, Kansas. Jobs were plentiful, and many of the Indians and whites obtained employment. The railroad camps were tough places to be. Fights, rows, drinking, and gambling were common. When the railroad started to go through the Sac and Fox reservation they were delayed for some time by the government. After much bargaining the railroad finally paid a high price for the privilege of going through the reservation.

Many an Indian have I seen pass my place on his way home just as drunk as a hootowl, singing and whooping and having a merrytime. One of my neighbors drank a lot. He was a fine fellow other than that. Arthur Davis was his name, and he was a very likeable man. He was a typical Indian of the old type--long hair, broad shoulders, a tall, well proportioned frame.

Cushing at that time was a pretty tough town, especially in the part known now as "Old Town" Lots of gambling and drinking went on there.

The trail to Guthrie was very rough, and it took two or three days to travel over it in a wagon. People rode on horseback mostly, though.

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The Indians have been very good to me. Especially in the early days they helped me get started. If it had not been for their assistance, many times I would have been near failure.