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Robert H. Boatman
Investigator
February 25, 1938

Interview with I. T. Dodd
Lexington, Oklahoma.

My father, Melton C. Dodd, was born in Tennessee, June 20, 1818, and there he remained till about 1850, at which time he came to the Indian Territory. In those days there were only a few white people to be found here and a man's gun was the law. There were no roads or bridges, in fact, there wasn't anything except a large open country of range land filled with wild game, turkeys, deer, antelope and wolves, also prairie chickens.

Steamboats came up the Arkansas River to Fort Smith, many supplies were brought up on boats for the Indians. There were many Indians here and they were then very uncivilized. They wore the breech clouts then and the men all had long hair, wore rings in their ears and had many peculiar ways. For weapons of defense they had bows and arrows, of which they kept a good supply. The arrows were pointed with flint stones called arrowheads. The Indians lived mostly in the open in tents, or tepees they were called. There were no houses to speak of at

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all, only a very rude log hut could be found. Many traders came and went. In order to trade with the Indians these men would bring blankets and collections of trinkets. The Indians had little money then but always had lots of horses and these traders would trade for the horses and in this way many men have become rich.

In case of sickness among the tribes they used their own doctor. Medicines were compounded from herbs and prepared in various ways. Some would be dried and then pulverized in powder form, others boiled in the form of teas. Each family had its own burial ground which was always very close to the home.

Father established a trading post in the Choctaw Nation and the Indians would always come to trade in bunches, generally on horseback, and would have bunches of arrows tied to their saddles. Once Father stole a bundle of arrows from an Indian and this came near to causing a riot. Quick action on his part and by much explaining and returning the arrows to the owner, restored peace and quiet.

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Father continued to operate this post for some time, then tired of the ways and customs of business among the early Indians, so abandoned his place of business and moved to Missouri, where some years later he died and is buried in Missouri.

I have spent the better part of my life in the Indian Territory and Oklahoma. I now live at Lexington.