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L. W. Wilson  
Field Worker  
May 10, 1937.

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Interview with Mr. R. Z. Dugan  
Born 1878, Tennessee

Mr. Dugan states as follows:

I am of Cherokee decent, although I never tried to prove citizenship in the territory. I was born in Tennessee in 1878, and moved first to Kansas by train with my parents and from there came by wagon to the Koo-wee-Skoo-wee district of the Cherokee Nation, in 1890.

My parents started farming and later on when I was large enough, I was employed by the Dawes Commission, first as teamster with a surveying party and later became a rodman and chairman with party No. 5. Our work being <sup>con</sup>fined principally to the Canadian district. Our Supervisor was Mr. M. D. Christian and our Chief Engineer was Mr. C. Patterson.

At a point between Adair and Claremore, Oklahoma, of today in the Koo-wee-Skoo-wee district, we found the old Indian tribal laws; in force; of course, the tribal laws reigned among all the Five Civilized Tribes.

Northeast of Claremore, Oklahoma, at Keep tol Springs, on Dog Creek, court was held in a log house for this district. The tribes of each district had their own Judge, Prosecuting Attorney and Sheriff, with a staff of deputies. There were no jails. The sheriff was responsible

for his prisoner until tried. If the prisoner was found guilty, he would be sentenced to receive so many lashes at the whipping post. Or if the crime so warranted, he would be hung.

Citizens of the United States were tried in United States Court at Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

All lands belonged to the tribe in common. No taxes were paid as we pay ad valorem taxes today. They paid the expenses of their government by license, royalties, annuities, leases and so forth and also maintained their schools with these monies.

In the early nineties, the U. S. Congress passed a bill to induce the Indians to give up the tribal laws and to allow each member of the tribe to have his own separate land or homestead based of course on the appraisal of the land, thus paving the way to state-hood.

The Dawes Commission was established, one of its duties being to make up tribal rolls of all citizens of the tribe. I speak of the Cherokee Nation as I talk to you but this applies to all the five civilized tribes. The rolls were after a length of time finally completed. But this was not all, for it took much time to appraise the land and to survey it off into parcels of from 50 to 160 acres, as well as lay-off town sites.

This was only fair to all because the land varied so much in quality as the hill and rocky lands were not, of course, worth as much as the land along the river and creek bottoms for either farming or stock raising.

The Indians objected to all this and many refused to the end to enroll but finally they were made to realize that it was a reality as the U. S. was going through with it and they had to take it or nothing. Many, too, tried to enroll that were not entitled to. Also the negro question came up and that was finally settled by giving them, I believe, an even 40 acres.

At first oil, coal and other lands possessing minerals were reserved to be the property as a whole for the benefit of the tribe in the particular nation where such deposits were found. Of course town-sites were also reserved and sold in lots to buyers as today.

The Indian laws were abolished and the Indians, whites and negroes were allowed to vote in the towns for the officers to run the town or city.

Many things took place in the transformation of government during the years of the Dawes Commission and, as I have said, I was one who helped to do the surveying of allotments and townsites.

The cemetery here was also platted, the same being the west  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the NE.  $\frac{1}{4}$ —of the NE.  $\frac{1}{4}$ —Sec. 26-twp 13 North, Range 19 East, in Muskogee, County.

The Cherokee Nation in the hill country particularly, where we worked, was thickly wooded and covered with dense underbrush and it required much hard labor to run section, half section and other lines.

There was little farming done in the hill country, but at this time an Indian could cultivate as much as he cared to if he did not get over on to some other Indians' clearing.

We also experienced some difficulty here in the Cherokee Nation because their law was that no one could fence more than 50 acres and lots of times we found man more acres than 50 fenced and used for pasturage of cattle, in short as ranches.

The houses were mostly of logs, one and two rooms with large fire places. There were, however, some well built farm houses among the more prosperous, but these in most cases were owned by half-breeds and even less than that down to 1/8 Indians. Some had nice two story homes with 6 and 8 rooms. The Taylors back here 2 miles had a nice home. It still stands, though today it's in a very bad state of repair. The Taylors operated the old stage stand there at one time. It's on the old stage

road, Muskogee to Webber Falls. It is located in Sec. 1-Twp. 12-Vann Twp. About 200 yards from the old home is the old Taylor Cemetery. The Taylors and many more old pioneers are buried there (The inter ~~is~~ ever spent  $\frac{1}{2}$  day in this cemetery and has written it up separate from this interview).

The full-bloods owned little live stock, possibly a few cows and a horse or two. They farmed practically with one horse. The woods were full of nuts, acorns, etc. And their hogs lived principally on mast.

There were lots of wild fruits and berries and plenty of wild game of the smaller varieties. Many of the Indians and settlers, however, had put out young orchard of apple, peach, plum, pear, cherry, and fruit trees of like nature, as well as grapes.

There were many schools. Country schools were usually in small cabins. They had good teachers but their salary was very meager. The Female Seminary at Tahlequah was a building anybody would be proud of today. The Boys Seminary was south of Tahlequah about two miles and it was a nice building. These latter two schools were Cherokee

National Schools. English was taught in all the schools.

They also had an Orphan Asylum in the Koo-wee-Skoo-wee district at or near the present town of Salina, Oklahoma. Mrs. Reeves living over here by Mountain Grove School used to be at this Orphan home. See her and she can tell you lots about it. (The interviewer will write the story of Mrs. Reeves.)

The last judges under the tribal laws in the Canadian District were Judge W. M. McLain and Judge Walter Agnew.

Judge McLain, at the town of McLain, operated and owned the first saw mill, grist mill and post-office. The odd Fellows Hall here was the house in which we platted and made the prints of the town site.

Before the town of McLain, about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of this townsite, was a trading post known as Falling. A man by the name of Mr. Crane operated a store and ran the post-office there. Those living near this trading post as I remember some of them were Geo. Glass and Alec Campbell. Falling no longer exists.

In these days if a white man married an Indian, 10 citizens of the tribe would have to vouch for his character, a license must be issued and he would become an adopted

member of the tribe and called in inter-married citizen.

At the present Brushy Mountain Spring, located about 8 miles southeast of Muskogee, Oklahoma, my grandfather, John Tate, a minister, started the first Camp Meeting at this location. It was in 1890. The arbor at first was poles placed in the ground, poles overhead and then covered with straw. Later they placed logs in the ground and built a roof of split shingles, clap board shingles, split from logs with a fro. The seats were split logs. This camp meeting operated each year for 20 years. After my grandfather our preacher was Rev. Coppage. The people in this locality looked forward each year to attending camp meeting, more so than they do now the State Fair. I, myself attended this meeting for 19 consecutive years. The meeting lasted usually two weeks. The spring furnished abundant cool fresh water and does yet. We would take our teams and wagons, load up with flour, meal, lard, meat, chickens and all kinds of food stuff, including feed for the teams, and just live at the meeting from the time it started until it finished. It was a great event and took place at the time in summer when our crops were all laid by ---"July".

Besides farming some engaged in the cattle business. I remember up near Adair, I. T., a ranch owned by Blue & Tuck Rider, that handled two or three thousand head. Nip Blackstone near now Forum, Oklahoma, on Georgia Fork Creek, handled a 1000 head yearly. The Dunnigan Ranch was located south and west of the present town of Warner, Oklahoma, handled a 1000 head yearly. The Geo. Scott Ranch near McLain, I. T., handled a 1000 head and Grayson Wills Ranch near McLain, I. T., handled 10,000 head yearly.

Living near Webber Falls, as I do, I remember seeing steam boats land there but have forgotten their names. I do remember the last boat to go up the Arkansas River as far as Hyde Parks, which is north east of Muskogee, Oklahoma, was the "Mary D".

I remember the ferry at Webber Falls, across the Arkansas River was owned by Joe Lynch. It was near the present highway bridge.

The ferry east of Illinois City or now Gore, Oklahoma, that crossed the Illinois River was owned by Bullet Foreman.

The ferry east of Webber Falls crossing the Canadian River about 6 miles up stream from its mouth was owned by Joe Vann.

The ferry crossed the Arkansas River at the mouth of Grand River near the present Muskogee Pump Station and Hyde Park was known as the Nevins Ferry and was owned by Julia Nevins.

The Smith Ferry crossed the Arkansas River about 1 mile south and 7 miles east of Muskogee in the goose neck bend country and was owned by Junior Smith.

The Midland Valley railroad was built through the Cherokee Nation about 1904.

The M.O. & G.R.R. built south out of Miami, I. T., in 1906.

The P. & G. now K.C. & S.R.R. built through eastern Indian Territory in 1894.

The St. L.I.M. & S. now Mo. Pac. R.R. had just finished construction north out of Ft. Smith, Arkansas to Coffeyville, Kansas, when we came to the territory. It started out of Ft. Smith in 1886.

#### COMMENT

Mr. Dugan is only 60 years old but for forty seven years he and his people have lived here in Oklahoma.

Besides being an ideal citizen he has lived the life of a devoted husband and a loving father.