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Investigator,
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An Interview with R. L. Nichols,
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Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

My father, R. J. Nichols, was born near Covington, Virginia, on October 17, 1847, on a small farm. His father passed away when he was eleven years old and left him and his younger brother to make a living for their mother. On this farm they raised lots of fruit and some corn. All the apples and peaches were made into brandies and the corn into whiskey. After they got all their crop made up, a Government agent came and guaged all the whiskey and brandy they had and then it was sold to bonded warehouse companies. That was the only way they had of marketing the farm products they raised.

When the Civil War broke out in 1861, he ran away from home and enlisted in the company which acted as General Robert E. Lee's bodyguard. He stayed with his regiment until the close of the war and received only one wound. He was shot in the left shoulder and carried three

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shots in that shoulder until his death.

After the close of the war, he with his mother and brothers, moved to northeast Missouri and settled in Lewis County near Canton, and he made several trips over Iowa and Missouri. In August 19, 1869, he was married to Mildred Louise Ray of Canton, Missouri, where he continued to reside until 1874 when he moved to Texas. The country was in an unsettled condition, everyone had to undergo lots of hardships in those days.

I was born near Canton, Missouri, on August 1, 1870, the son of R. J. Nichols. I stayed most of the time with my grandmother Nichols. She lived on her farm in a two story house built on a hillside and that made one side of the house almost three stories high. It was lots of fun for me to take her old cat upstairs and throw him out the window. Of course when my grandmother found it out it was not so funny.

I was only four years old when my father left Missouri for Texas, but I can recall lots of things that happened before we left there. I can remember seeing men hauling cord wood across the Mississippi River on the ice. Also seeing

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the ice when it broke up in the spring forming what they called an ice gorge and pushing ice up on the banks that was three feet thick.

We lived near a creek and the ice from the river broke up before the creek did and in the big jam pushed a big bridge off its foundation that was on the creek. I also remember we had a German neighbor named Schults and he had a son Louie. Mr. Schults always put up ice in winter for his summer use. He also had a big grape vineyard and one day my mother sent my sister and me across the road to Mr. Schults' house after a bucket of ice and it had always been our custom to pull a bunch of grapes to eat. On one day Louie Schults hid in the grape bushes and when my sister pulled off a bunch of grapes he jumped out and gave us a big scare.

The Schults family were well to do people and had plenty of everything they needed. They also had a big brindle bulldog that always looked bad to us children.

Mr. Schults was a good man and neighbor but he had a way of taking things that did not belong to him. One Fall he helped my father kill his meat hogs and salt them

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away to cure. On a cold night my father heard the rattle of the chain that fastened the smokehouse door and he got out of bed and took his shotgun and went to a side door to see what was going on out at the smokehouse. He could not see the man but did see a big dog standing just behind where the man was standing so he just shot the dog and he then heard a man running but made no effort to shoot him. Next morning when he went out to see what kind of a dog he had shot what did he find but Mr. Shults' big brindle bulldog, Bose. Of course, he hated it that he had killed his neighbor's dog. He dragged the dog off. After several days he met Mr. Schults and as it was such a habit for old Bose to go with him everywhere he went my father remarked, "What has become of old Bose? I don't see him with you lately". Mr. Schults told him that old Bose followed Louie hunting one night and got lost and had never come home yet. My father never told him about Louie trying to break in his smokehouse and that he had killed the dog.

In November, 1874, about fifteen or twenty families started from my father's home near Canton, Missouri, for

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Texas. As I recall my father had two wagons. One wagon was drawn by a big span of iron gray mares and the other had a big bey mare and a big black horse. Everything was a jubilee as everybody was excited to be making such a trip. Of course lots of our friends told us the wild Indians would kill us all on the way to Texas, also told us thieves would steal all our stock. Finally we got started. It was a hard trip as all roads were poor in those days and we could only make a few miles each day and we never traveled on Sunday.

We left Missouri at Neosho and headed for the Indian Territory near what is now the town of Vinita. From there we came on to Fort Gibson near the city of Muskogee. All through the trip at least two men stood guard at night to see that everything went on well. We saw lots of deer and turkey all along the way but for some reason our party never tried to kill any. One Saturday evening after we had made camp by standing the wagons in a circle and building a big log fire in the middle of the enclosure to cook on and keep warm by it was agreed that my Uncle Walter Ray who was driving one of my father's wagons and another man would kill a

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deer the next morning so all would have fresh meat.

My uncle and the other man started out real early after the deer meat for Sunday dinner. They had not gone far until they saw what they took to be two full grown deer. They very promptly did the big creeping act to get in gun shot range. After crawling for several hundred yards they finally decided they were close enough to kill the deer and it was agreed that one would shoot the deer on the right and the other shoot to the left. After lots of slow getting along they raised up and the first glimpse of the deer they both fired at the same time. They saw each animal fall at the crack of their gun and both ran to where the deer fell. When they reached the spot to their great surprise and disappointment they discovered they had killed two wild Spanish buros or wild jackasses. Of course, every one in camp heard the gun shots and when they got into camp they told everyone the deer got away and it was a long time before they even told the folks the truth.

That finished the hunting on the trip except for quail, squirrel and prairie chickens. There were thou-

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sands of prairie chickens everywhere you went and wild turkey were to be found in great droves.

One night we camped near a wild pigeon roost and there is no way of counting how many thousand there were at the roost. In the morning when someone shot in a flock of them there was so many flew up that the sky was literally black with them.

After leaving Fort Gibson we moved on to what is now McAlester. It was a very rough road one had to travel; in fact, it could hardly be called a road. There were no bridges on small creeks and rivers. Some places there were improvised toll bridges on creeks where the water was too deep to ford.

we were all getting tired and so were the horses, but we had our minds set on Texas. The next place we made was Stringtown. In the evening of the day we arrived at Stringtown my father and others saw two men walking in the same direction they were traveling. At one time some of the men saw a rope hanging down from under one of the men's overcoat so that put them all to thinking about horse thieves.

As was the custom there was a guard of two men stationed

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near the wagons and also two other men heavily armed were sent out quite a way from the camp where they concealed themselves in some bushes where they could see any one coming near the camp. About 9 P.M. after everything in camp had gotten still, these two men who were the farthest from the camp, heard a man cough and it was not long until they heard him cough again. They intently watched for the strangers to come on closer to them. They did not have to wait long until they could, from their place of hiding, see the bulk of the men. They let them come on until the two men were only about twenty yards away when they both raised up with drawn shotguns and told the men to surrender, which they did without firing a shot.

The two guards marched the men up to the campfire and called other men to come out and search the two men they had arrested. On them was found an old Cap and Ball Army pistol and each one had a bridle with a rope tied to it under their coats. By that time everyone in the camp was up to see what was going on. After holding a council of war the men were marched off quite a distance

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from the camp and no one ever told what was done to the two horse thieves.

There were no courts in the Indian Territory in those days and most horse thieves were taken to a neck-tie party and had to furnish the neck on such occasions.

After leaving Stringtown we moved on to where Durant is now and after several days finally reached Red River which was up at that time and this caused several days delay. We crossed the Red River on a ferry boat and landed in Texas, near the town of Denison. From there we turned west and presently came to Gainesville, the town we had set out to stop at. We were met at Gainesville by an Uncle of mine, my mother's brother, Alex Ray, who had come to Texas the year before. Everyone was very tired as was also the work stock and no one tried to do anything except rest and recount the long trip just finished.

Gainesville at that time (1874) was a very small town, its chief support being the trade of a few scattered settlers who did their trading there. It also had some trade (in fact all there was) from a distance of a hundred miles in the Indian Territory. It was no uncommon sight to

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see twenty-five or maybe thirty wagons of people from as far north as where Purcell is now, coming to Gainesville in the Fall of the year loaded with deer hides, venison hams, cow hides and other small animal hides that they would bring to market for sale. In those days almost all grocery stores kept maybe from three to five barrels of whiskey in a back room fitted up for that purpose.

When the traders would get to town if it was late in the day they would put their wagons and teams in what they called a "wagon yard" for the night. Every wagon yard had a camp house for their customers to stay in at night. In the camp house each bunch of men would cook their meals and then make down the beds on the floor or on "bunks" that were built in the corners of the camp house.

If they had brought dressed turkeys, tallow or any other stuff for sale it was always disposed of the next day after their arrival and then they would buy such things as were really needed to live on such as clothing, groceries, and almost always a man would take a jug of whiskey home with him.

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In 1874 Gainesville had only one small brick store building, and it belonged to George Y. Bird who ran a little dry goods store in it. His stock consisted mostly of such articles as ranchers and cowhands would need and, of course, a few things for the women of the country. There was no courthouse there and court was held in an old board house. One other business that helped to keep Gainesville going was the "hide trains" that passed through there on their way to Jefferson, Texas, then the nearest railroad shipping point. It was a great sight to see from twenty-five to fifty ox teams of ten yoke hitched to a big wagon to which would be two trail wagons attached and all loaded with buffalo hides. The hides had been skinned from buffaloes that were being killed on the west Texas plains by hunters who killed for the hides only. It was a great slaughter as thousands upon thousands of buffaloes were slain. These "hide trains" traveled slowly only making possibly ten miles per day. They would always stop outside of town so the oxen could be turned loose to graze on the fine grass that grew everywhere. There was always

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one or two horses with these hide trains to herd the oxen with at night and to drive them up in the morning when they were ready to move on to their destination.

When these hide trains came to town business was sure to pick up with eating places and saloons and gambling houses. These were always a very tough bunch of men and after spending weeks on the trail from west Texas plains and eating such food as sour dough bread and sow bosom they were ready to take on a "big feed" and, of course, it was the custom of some to tank up on the first whiskey they found. Gainesville was always glad to see the hide trains and most people were glad to see them pull out of sight as the bull whackers were a very tough unruly bunch of men.

In those days and until in the '80's it was no uncommon thing for a bunch of from ten to twenty cowboys from the Washington or McLish ranches in Indian Territory to come to Gainesville on horseback and have a big time such as riding in saloons and ordering drinks, sitting on their horses, and sometimes throwing a rope on any policeman who happened to show up and maybe leading him around the square with possibly

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ten or fifteen cowboys shooting in the ground near his feet to see him jump. They would do these tricks just before they were ready to leave town and generally a posse was gotten together to arrest the cowboys but the Indian Territory cow hands would always outrun the officers as the south bank of the river is the state line between Texas and Oklahoma.

My father and family rented a farm for next year (1875) on the south or Texas side of the Red River and in the river bottom. In July of that year (1875) there came a great rise in the river that not only washed away his crop but also washed away the farm it was growing on, and today most of that farm is on the Oklahoma side of Red River, covered with a heavy growth of big cottonwood timber.

Notwithstanding good smooth prairie land could be bought for 50 cents to \$1.00 per acre close to Gainesville, my father felt it was no use to try to farm out on the prairie as there was a very light rainfall in those days and, too, there was no timber to make rails to fence a farm with nearer than ten to twenty miles away. So in the Fall of 1875 my father contracted to put in a farm (clear it up)

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in the Red River bottom on the Indian Territory side of the river. He took the lease from Edmond Love (my wife's uncle) for a term of ten years. That was a big job as the land was covered with timber, brush and green briars. He also had to make rails to fence the land, had to cut logs and hew them to build a house and make clapboards to cover the house with. In fact everything needed on the place had to be put there by my father. On account of the washout in the Summer of 1875 he sold one span of mares to furnish money to meet the needs of the family. The first year on the lease (1876) he rented some land that was in cultivation from Mrs. Story (my wife's grandmother) to make a crop on as he could not get in enough land on the lease to make him a full crop.

In the Spring of '76 one of his horses died so that just left him one horse. He managed to get the use of another horse until he got his crop finished. In the Fall of '76 he traded his one horse for a big yoke of work oxen to plow the new ground on the lease with. Winter came on and he had only \$15.00 or \$20.00 to buy clothes for the family. In early days he had learned to do carpenter work and he made a little money

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helping other people build their homes. It was his custom, too, to make all coffins for neighbors who died in the surrounding country but he never charged anything for such work.

During the Winter of '76 he got about twenty acres cleared and plowed up and as it was very fertile land it made good crops. He continued to clear the land until he got 40 acres in cultivation.

In working oxen it was common to just feed them at night and then feed them only about a peck of corn and some hay. We always turned them out at night to graze on the grass that grew everywhere but almost always hobbled them by using a heavy strip of rawhide twisted together between their front feet. The hobbles would prevent them from running off with wild cattle that were very plentiful in all parts of the country. If a work steer should slip his hobbles off, it might take all day to get him back home again.

In the early days when we settled here there was lots of game such as deer, turkey, prairie chicken, to say nothing of quail, duck, geese and squirrel. One could go out

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and kill a deer or turkey most any time or more than one if they wanted to.

There was a man named Sam Harper who lived close to my father and he was a great hunter. He would kill a deer and always bring us a hind quarter or if he hunted turkey he would always bring part of the game he killed.

In those days there were lots of really wild hogs in the upland timber as well as in the river bottoms. In the early Spring my father would get some of our neighbors to help him catch and mark a lot of young hogs as well as old ones and then turn them loose to get fat for meat in the Fall and Winter. The hogs would get fat on acorns, pecans and wild peas that grew in the bottoms. The only way a regular wild hog would eat corn was for him to get into a corn field. You could put one of them in a pen and he would actually starve to death before he would eat corn you would put in his pen.

Wild hogs were very dangerous when cornered. The old boars often had tusks four or five inches long and would kill a dog at one stroke with his tusks. A dog had to be well trained to catch wild hogs. The only way a dog

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could handle an old boar or an old sow was to make a lunge and catch the hog by the ear and then lay right back by the side of the hog, or he could catch by the lower part of the ham and then stay behind the hog. If an old sow had a bunch of pigs she was just about as dangerous as the old boar.

I think it was in September, 1876, there was a total eclipse of the sun that happened about 3 P.M. It got dark as night and everybody was really scared as they were not expecting such a thing to happen. The chickens all went to roost as though it was night. No one took papers in those days to see what was going on or what was going to happen and if they did take newspapers there was no mail delivery. We had to go eight miles to Gainesville after our mail and never made many trips to town during the year and then only when it was really necessary.

There was lots of sickness such as chills and malaria in Indian Territory in the early days on account of heavy rank vegetation. Lots of land being put in cultivation naturally caused more or less sickness also in the country.

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It was no uncommon thing to see the whole family in bed with chills and fever. Doctors were scarce and medicine very high. Most people resorted to some old Indian remedy to stop the chills such as a tea made from boiling horse-mint or button willow roots or some other herb that some one thought was the best for stopping the chills. Of course, in serious sickness someone was sent to Gainesville for a doctor and the expense was plenty high.

About 1878, my father with other men in the settlement decided there should be a school for the children who had moved into the Territory and settled near our farm. There was not much lumber in Gainesville and it had to be freighted from Jefferson, Texas, and was very high in price so they decided to build a log school house.

It was quite a job to build the house but every man and boy in the community turned out to do all he could in getting the house ready for school. My father had me take a yoke of his work steers and drag the logs out of a nearby forest to the site where the building was to be located. They then got permission from Mrs. Stacy, an Indian woman (my wife's grandmother), who owned the land they had selected

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on which to build the house, to use it for school and church purposes. The house was finally built and covered with clapboards but there was no floor except the dirt. For seats they cut straight logs and split them open and dressed the split side to make it smooth, then each end of this split log was laid on a block of wood and that made a good strong seat. Our first teacher was a Dr. Green and he taught us as best he could under the circumstances.

A spring of water was nearby for use of the school and it was great fun to have the teacher allow two of us boys to go after a bucket of water. Some of the neighbor women furnished a gourd that would hold about a quart of water and had a handle possibly twenty inches long. There also was a drinking gourd kept hanging up near the spring for anyone passing to use in getting a drink.

These were great days as school was something new in the country. We would go to school about three or four months in the Winter after cotton was all picked and about two or three months in the Summer after crops were all laid by or finished for the Spring.

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In the Fall or Sundays and other days when we had nothing to do, my brother, Frank, and I and other boys who played with us would go into bottoms and pick up pecans, also get wild grapes that grew in abundance in all the timber. These were called "Post Oak" grapes and were just as good as our Concord grapes of today and people from forty or fifty miles in Texas would come over in the Indian country and gather those wild Post Oak grapes for jelly and wine.

In the Fall and Winter the leaves would fall off the trees and as the wind would blow them, they would lodge in deep hollows or ravines and sometimes would get two or three feet deep. One Sunday morning we boys started out to get some pecans and were going along on top of the hills just out of the river bottom when we saw an immense pile of leaves down in a deep ravine and, of course, we were bent on doing something we should not do. So we ran down the steep bank and jumped right out in the middle of the big pile of leaves and to our surprise there were about fifteen or twenty wild hogs denned up in this pile of leaves

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for the day. It was pretty hard to tell who was scared the most, we boys or the wild hogs. The hogs struck a bee line for home. Wild hogs would seldom ever run around in daytime but always did their feeding in the night time. Of course people hunting wild hogs in the Fall and Winter for meat would always use trained dogs that would run them out of their hiding places. Wild hog meat never was as good as meat from tame hogs fattened on corn.

As a rule the Indians never bothered anyone. Sometimes an Indian would get some whiskey that peddlers sold him and maybe he would get on a tear and shoot all the trees around his house.

If an Indian killed an Indian he was always tried in the Indian courts and if he was convicted he would be shot to death by an Indian officer detailed to do such a job. He was never put in jail but after conviction he was allowed to go home and make ready to die by disposing of his property and on the day of his execution he would be there to be shot to death. If he was convicted of killing

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another Indian's beef he would be tried in the Indian courts at Tishomingo and if convicted he would be tied to a post or tree and whipped on his naked back the number of lashes the Judge had decided he should have. The Federal Government did not have jurisdiction over an Indian unless he killed a white man or stole cattle from a white man. This was rarely ever heard of in those days.

In an early day my wife's uncle, Ed Love, had an old negro slave making some rails for him and he got into an argument with the old negro about the kind of rails he was making and the negro ran at Love with an axe drawn and said he was going to kill Mr. Love and that he had wanted to kill him for a long time. Love was on his horse and was in some brush where he could not get away from the negro so he shot the negro and killed him on the spot. Love left home and stayed away for sometime as he knew if the Indian officers got him he would be taken to Tishomingo, tried and shot. A man named Overton was Governor of the Chickasaw Nation at

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that time and he did not like any of the Loves as they were a powerful people when it came to Indian courts and elections. He sent Ed Love word to come to court and stand trial for killing the Indian's negro slave but Love sent him word to come get him if he could. Love was on the scout for two or three years staying in Texas part of the time and at home part of the time. He had lots of friends and they would always keep him posted when the Indian Militia were in the country. The Indian Militia only would come up in our part of the country about once every six months and someone would always see them in time to let Ed know they were looking for him.

He stayed with his brother, Sloan Love, who had recently married a northern girl by the name of Nannie Lucas. She was scared all the time the Militia would come to their house hunting for Ed and shoot her trying to shoot Ed. One day the Militia did come and Ed did not see them in time to get away until they saw him. As Love always kept a good horse saddled close to where he was he had a better chance to get away. This time he had his horse where to get

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away from the Militia he had to run the horse through a hall between two rooms of the Love home where Sloan Love's wife was at that time. He jumped on the horse and as he started the horse across the floor of the big hall he began shooting back at the Militia. The Militia was also shooting at him. That almost scared Mrs. Love to death as she had never heard anything like it before. Ed Love rode his horse into a corn field and after he had gone a little way the Militia turned back for they knew Love would kill some of them after he got where they could not see him. They were not taking any chances for a man well concealed with a good Winchester rifle could kill several before they would ever see him.

Ed Love got tired of being on the dodge of the officers for so long so he decided he would leave the country for good and stay away. One day he came to my father and asked him to go with him as far as Ft. Worth and then he would take a train for old Mexico. He selected two of his best horses, a big long-legged roan and a dark bay horse, both of which were extra good horses. One evening about sundown he came leading the big roan horse and told my father he was ready

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to leave. Finally my father agreed to go with him with the understanding he would not get him (my father) into trouble. They rode to Ft. Worth that night and as my father was not used to such hard riding he was worn out when they got to Ft. Worth. They went to bed and slept most of the day. My father helped Love get some clothes and made inquiry about time the train would leave going toward old Mexico. Real early next morning my father went with Ed Love to the livery stable and saddled both horses, Love tied two nice blankets on one saddle. My father took his Winchester and his saddle and after bidding Ed a good-bye started back home. He got home about sundown that day with the two horses and saddles. Love told him to keep the horses for his trouble but it was not his intention to do so as he was only paying back favors Love had so often done for him.

No sooner had my father left Ed Love than he met up with some stranger who turned out to be a sharper who was trying to get what money Love had. The sharper finally found out who Love was after he had gotten most of Love's money and then he told the police who Ed Love was.

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The officers arrested him as Love thought for hitting his sharper friend in the face with his gun. After he was arrested the law questioned him and he admitted his name and that he was getting away from Governor Overton, so the officers sent a runner to see if Governor Overton did want him. Governor Overton sent a company of Indian Militia to meet Love at Red River and took him back to Tishomingo for trial. Instead of giving Love a fair trial the Governor ordered him shot at once. Without any preliminaries he was marched out in a ring made on the ground and three Militia all fired at the same time. The Governor sent word to Love's brother and sister that they could come get the body of Ed Love, and they did so. About two hundred men gathered at my father's house the next day and all wanted to go and take Governor Overton out and hang him. But Sloan Love told them there would only be a battle and a lot of them get killed so after my father joined in with Sloan Love the crowd finally dispersed but none of them were satisfied. If anyone would have acted as a leader they would have tried to lynch Governor Overton, which probably should have been done.

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After the schoolhouse was finished it was decided to have church there as often as possible. Almost any minister was welcome; it did not make much difference what denomination he was. We used that schoolhouse for several years. Also had church there quite often. In the Summer the neighbors gathered in and built a big brush arbor to hold revivals in, sometimes in those days called camp meetings. Those who lived close enough to drive back and forth in their wagons did so and those who lived far away would come there and camp. There would possibly be fifty or more conversions at those meetings and instead of a baptistry as is used by some churches today, the whole congregation would go down to Red River and select a nice sandy beach and all join hands and wade right out in the water to the proper depth and then the preacher would go down the line and baptize them as he came to them. I, myself, was baptized in such a way.

In later years as the country settled up it was necessary to have a larger school building to accommodate the children. This time the folk made up enough money to build a box house, I think about 20 x 50 feet. Also had seats

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made out of lumber. My father and some other men built this house and made the seats. This building was located one mile north of the old Brown's Ferry, on Red River. In fact, it was where the main highway divided on going to Brown's Ferry and the other going to what was known as the Sacra Ferry. These two ferries were about one mile apart on Red River but both roads let to Gainesville.

From 1870 to 1880 it was no uncommon thing to see big herds of cattle being driven by the schoolhouse where we went to school. Sometimes there would be as many as 5,000 cattle in one drove and it would take all day for them to pass the schoolhouse. I can remember sitting near the wall of the house and working out a chinking that held the mortar between the logs so as to make me a hole to peep out at to see the cattle passing.

In crossing Red River with those big herds of cattle it would sometimes take a week to get the herd across the river. Frequently they would get part of the herd across and the balance would not take the water. As the river was almost always up in the Spring it was hard to try to cross it with cattle as sometimes they would swim out to

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the middle of the stream and then some steer would turn back. That caused all the cattle to go to "milling" or swimming in a circle. Sometimes there would be a lot of cattle drowned and maybe a horse get drowned and sometimes a cow hand get drowned. A cow hand who understood his business, when he found his horse was about to give out from swimming, would quit his horse and grab a big strong steer by the horns and swim back by the side of the steer still holding the steer's horn with one hand. "You may bet this was no "picnic" but often a man could "point" the herd across the river in this way. He could stop them from milling by staying first on one side of the steer and then the other and by throwing water in the steer's face to turn him.

In two or three years Texanna got to be a nice little village but after the Santa Fe Railroad built north from Gainesville in 1886 other towns sprung up and Texanna just faded away.

We had good schools in Texanna in those days. I recall we had a man teacher named E. T. Isley who would teach 125

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children without any trouble at all and I mean we had our lessons or knew the reason why.

When I was about sixteen years old I went to school there as did several other big boys about my age. Among them was a boy named Louis Mouthay, who was much larger than any other boy in school and was a very overbearing sort of a boy. He could whip any one of us so three other boys of my size and myself banded together for protection. We were Willard Carder, Dick Simpson and Oscar Connally and myself. In this arrangement we found lots of ways to get "even" with "old Louis" as we called him. Among other things we would whistle or throw a paper ball across the house and when the teacher would come and ask who did the mischief we would never tell him that Louis did it but all four of us would look straight at "old Louis" and laugh. Of course, Louis would deny doing anything but the teacher would draw him up and give him a good sound whipping. Of course, we would all four stay close together so Louis who was much bigger than we were could not whip any one of us.

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People in the early days of the settlement of the country did not give checks in payment for things they bought. If one was to start out to buy cattle he would take the money along, usually in his saddle pockets to make the payment with. I have seen lots of men with \$1,000, or \$1,500 in gold in their saddle pockets at a time. Even as late as 1886 lots of people kept their money concealed at home. I remember in '86 my wife's uncle, Hiram Awd, bought a good farm out in Texas at a cost of \$8,000. The agreement was the purchase price would be paid in gold when a deed was given. One day Mr. Awd came to Mrs. Stewart's home and told Mrs. Stewart he wanted her and Lottie, my wife, to go home with him as he had some work he wanted them to help him do that night. Of course he had told Mrs. Stewart what he was going to do. My wife said after the Awd children had been put to bed and were sure enough asleep, Mr. Awd went out of the house and got a bar of iron and pried up a big rock in the hearth of the fireplace and then dug down in the earth about a foot deep and got out an old dinner pot that he had

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buried there. However, before he got the pot out he went outside to make sure no one was near the house. After he came back in the house he fastened the door securely and got a shotgun and laid it close by ready for action, then he lifted the pot out of the hole under the hearth and he, Mrs. Stewart and my wife counted out \$8,000 in gold, 400 \$20 gold pieces and put them in a pan of hot water and scrubbed the dirt off the money so he could pay for the farm he had bought over in Texas. After he had counted out the 400 gold pieces he took the old pot outside the house and hid it at some other place he had prepared for it. After the 400 pieces were counted out my wife said there were at least that many more left in the pot. No one ever saw that pot so far as any of his family ever knew as he died in about one month and everyone is sure the gold is still hidden somewhere near where he lived.

In the early days of the settlement of Indian Territory it was possibly different from most any other new country. At that time one could not own land in the Territory as it was held in common by the Indians or as one

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might say, it was held as a big family office or estate. Every Indian could have as much land as he could fence and no one would object to him doing so.

The white people who came to the Indian Territory would lease a tract of land from some Indians and would then fence it - put it in cultivation for the use of it for from five to ten years. Cattlemen did not care to have a lease in the early days as they could get a permit from the Indian Government to run say one hundred head of cattle on the open range and then turn loose probably from five hundred to one thousand head to run at large on the good grass that covered the country at that time. A grazing permit would cost 25 cents per head per year but as the cowman only paid on one hundred head he was the one who made the big money.

Of course, there was cattle stealing in those days but it was done probably by someone who had cattle there on the same basis as the man from whom he was stealing but who would be in a different part of the Territory. Lots of the stealing was done by changing the brand on the cattle and keeping them hidden out until the brand

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healed up so it would not show it had been changed. Then, too, some man, who was inclined to steal in a small way, would kill a fat cow and sell it out to his neighbors to get a little ready money. If the thieves were caught they were taken to Ft. Smith and were nearly always convicted and sent to the "pen". It was hard to get anyone to swear against a man for anything he had done in the way of law violation, for the reason the witness would have to go up to Ft. Smith and maybe be gone a month waiting for the trial to be called. That left the family all alone at home and would give other thieves a good chance to steal one's cattle or horses while one was trying to prosecute another thief.

Most of the settlers were good men and women and were there to make them a home and living for their children. Lots of times these settlers would have gatherings to discuss the problems that confronted them. They had a rule that if one of them had a horse stolen some of the others would go help hunt for the thief and horse and if the man was caught it often was the last horse he ever stole. They thought that was the best way to stop horse

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stealing, to say nothing of being dragged off to Ft. Smith for a month or six weeks trying to break him from stealing by sending him to prison for a term of years.

Most people were law abiding people and wanted to treat everybody as they would be treated. They held Sunday School at some house in the community until there was a schoolhouse and church built and almost everyone would go to any services that were held in the church house as everyone felt he had an interest in the building.

Almost every man in the country carried a pistol buckled around him in those days. It was nothing uncommon to see half a dozen men in church on Sunday in their shirt sleeves with a big ivory handled six-shooter buckled on and there was nothing thought of it as it was a custom to carry pistols in those days.

There was no vocational training in the schools in those days in our country. We would play ball and blackman and on Friday evening would have big spelling matches which were always great occasions to me as spelling was my long suit. At that time there was not a word in our Blue Back Speller that I could not spell or a problem in Ray's

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Arithmetic, 3rd part, that I could not work and explain.

About 1880 the M.K. & T. Railroad built into Gainesville from Denison and stopped at Gainesville for several years. This made the town grow quite a lot. Everybody felt like a new era had dawned for them when the first train pulled into town. The merchants could get their goods in much quicker and it made the trade from the Indian Territory much better. I have seen forty or fifty wagons of white people and negroes passing our house in the Fall of the year, taking maybe a bale of cotton but almost always having some venison (deer) hams or probably some wild turkeys if it was cold weather, and always some cowhides to sell. Quite often, too, they had wildcat, coon, skunk, and mink hides to sell. They would almost always stop outside of town a few miles so as to be able to sell their wares and buy their supplies and leave town before night in order to save the expense of staying in the wagon yard. Some might stay on another day if they did not get to see the "sights" the first day. Sometimes they would get too much whiskey and then want to paint the town red. It would take a week to make a trip to Gainesville from Pauls

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Valley or as far north as Purcell and old Johnsonville (Byars):

The negroes who lived on Caddo Creek and Wild Horse Creek and as far north as Walnut Creek near Purcell would do their trading in Gainesville and some sometimes went to Sherman. They seldom ever caused any trouble when they went to town as they knew it would mean death to them. It was their habit to get their whiskey and take it home with them and then put on a "show" in their own country as a rule. Almost everyone who made those trips to market were men who were trying to make a home for their families.

In 1886 the Santa Fe built through Gainesville and on through the Indian country to Purcell where it was met by the A. T. & S. F. that was building from the north. It was a great sight for the people along the road to watch the contractors with hundreds of teams and scrapers building the road. It took nearly two years to complete the Red River bridge. There were about 500 men camped on the south bank of the river to say nothing of men who had private camps on both sides of the river. My father had about twenty acres of garden stuff the year of '86. It being a very dry year and his garden

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being on some sub-irrigated land he made a wonderful lot of beans, sweet potatoes, turnips and also had about ten acres of late corn for roasting ears. I got all the truck farming I wanted that year hauling those vegetables to those railroad camps. I have taken as much as fifty bushels of sweet potatoes or a wagon bed full of turnip greens to the big camp at the railroad bridge.

About the time the Santa Fe Railroad built across the Indian country our little town of Texanna was a thriving little village. Had a good school, big cotton gin, two stores, blacksmith shop, several new residences and a good doctor (Dr. E. T. Bynum).

On July 4, there was always an old fashioned picnic at the little town. I remember one Summer there was a big camp meeting held at Texanna. It lasted for about sixty days, in fact, as long as anyone would go. People who lived far away would come there and camp. Those who lived not so far would drive in every evening in their wagons and then go home after church was over at night. Of course, the little children got worn out and would sleep anywhere they had a chance to do so. It was a habit for the mothers to take the

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children and put them to sleep in the back end of their wagons on a quilt spread down for that purpose. One night, just for puremeanness, three of my chums and myself decided to create a disturbance. We went to the wagons where the children were all asleep and took the Jones baby and put it in the Smith wagon and took the Smith baby and put it in the Brown wagon until we had changed about a dozen little children into other wagons where they did not belong. When church was over the people drove away to their homes and when the children were taken in for the night, maybe they had a red-headed baby where theirs was a black or bald-headed one. It is very easy to understand what a commotion this caused. There was no way of telling who the baby really was. Some of them never got properly changed until the next day. You can safely bet we did not offer any help in getting them properly placed.

There was not much law in the Indian Territory in the early days. At the same time there was not so much law violation as we have today. Cattle and horse stealing was the most law violation we had and there were some murder cases.

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If a person stole cattle or horses or committed murder he was taken to Fort Smith, Arkansas, for trial and it was an almost universal rule when taken to Fort Smith to face the Federal Judge Parker, you never came back. This was more often the rule in murder cases. It was always understood that when you went to Fort Smith to be tried for murder you had just as well wind up your affairs before you left for Judge Parker always had a "convicting" jury in his court.

In gathering up the prisoners to take to court there would always be five or six United States Deputy Marshals in a bunch. They would have a "chuck" wagon and driver along and after they had arrested a man he was chained in a wagon they had along for the purpose of hauling the prisoners.

night

At/the marshals would put leg irons on the prisoners and then run a long chain through these leg irons and lock each end of the chain to a tree for the night. There would be some blankets spread down for the prisoners to sleep on during the night. These trips would often take a month to make and as they crossed the Territory the marshals would

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pick up white men, negroes and Indians; chain them all together in the wagon in daytime and chain them to trees at night. Sometimes when the marshals arrived in Fort Smith they would have from thirty to forty prisoners in their roundup.

The cattle business was really a thriving business along about from '78 to '82 or maybe '84. Grass was plentiful and there were thousands of Texas cattle turned loose on the north side of Red River. There were lots of cattlemen who lived in the Indian country, such men as the Stones, Washingtons and Dick McLish, the Roffs and many other such men and they did not really approve of Texas cattle being turned loose on their range. Some other cowmen who were in the Territory got rich off of the Texas cattle.

In the Spring of the year when cattle were in poor condition due from lack of feed during the Winter, cows would bog in the quicksand in the river and sometimes die or someone who wanted the cow's calf would knock the cow in the head and skin her, as her hide was worth from \$7.50 or \$8.00

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at that time, then the calf would be taken home and another cow given the calf to raise. I have known men who had about twenty-five head of old gentle cows to raise fifty or seventy-five head of calves in one year.

There was another kind of cattle rustler in the country at that time. He was one who would find a stray cow that had been lost on account of stampede or just got strayed away from the big herd that was passing through the country and who would change the brand to his own brand. In doing this he would drive the cow off from ~~ten to~~ fifteen miles after he had branded her. He would also find unmarked and unbranded calves and it was easy to put his brand on them and on the mothers, too. I have known several men who had good herds of cattle gotten that way. Those kind of men almost always went broke or went to the penitentiary sooner or later.

My father finally got three yoke of work oxen to do heavy plowing with and about 1880 he did quite a lot of plowing new land for other people. I remember plowing heavy sod near a big lake for a Mr. Gibson. As was always

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the custom we would leave the oxen hitched to the plow at the noon hour while he and I would go to dinner. One nice warm Spring day we left them as usual hitched to the plow and when we came back to work after dinner the steers, plow and all were gone.

We took the track the plow made in being dragged and soon found the team standing out in the lake in about two feet of water. There was nothing else to do but just wade out to where they were and drive them out. The "heel flies" had gotten after them and caused them to go in the water.

My father sent me with the three yoke of steers over in Texas to help a friend of ours to plow some heavy bottom land. The man, Sim Weaver, had two yoke of steers and he put his two yoke of steers and our three yoke together, making five yoke of fine steers. I was only ten years old at that time but I drove the five yoke of steers for two weeks, plowing as bad creek bottom land as was to be found anywhere. It would be a great sight to see some ten year old boy try to drive even one yoke of steers now, much less drive five yoke and really get the work done.

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It would be a great sight now to see five yoke of steers hitched to a wagon or plow.

Along about 1880 the Indian country began to fill up with Texas cattle and as was the custom the owners of the cattle were to pay the Indian Government 25 cents per head per year for grazing privilege but after the cattle was turned loose on the big open range it was very hard ever to collect any more grazing money. Quite often the Indian Government would send the Indian Militia out to round up a big herd of cattle and drive them across Red River into Texas but just as soon as the Militia had gone back to Tishomingo the cattlemen would drift the cattle back across the river. In those days there was no law to confiscate one's stock for a grazing bill and the cattlemen sure took advantage of such conditions to get free grass.

I think it was about 1885 the first barbed wire was brought into the Territory. People nor stock either knew how to use it. I have seen miles and miles of barbed wire fence built by stretching the wire from tree to tree and probably set a post every twenty to thirty yards apart.

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Horses were plentiful in all parts of the country and as is the habit of range horses when they start to water they always go on a run. When the wire fence was built I have seen lots and lots of horses cut all to pieces on the barbed wire fence as they were not used to such fences as the horses of today are. There were lots of cattle cut but nothing like the number of horses. Wild horses would actually kill themselves when they became entangled in the wire. When the wire became more in use as a fence, lots of cowmen took leases from some Indian and paid a dollar per year for the right to fence a big pasture. In those days an Indian could hold as much land as he could fence. Of course, there were a lot of big pastures fenced. In the Love Bend almost all the big herds of cattle belonged to Dick McLish, Bill and Jerry Washington. They had headquarters near where Marietta is now located. That country around Marietta was called the "Bog Prairie" in those days. These men did not try to fence any land except a horse pasture to keep saddle horses in.

As it is only about ten miles from Red River west to Marietta and only seven or eight on west from Marietta to

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Red River again, the Washingtons and McLish (who were brothers-in-law) just had some men ride a line across from river to river and keep their cattle drifted south of an imaginary line. This gave them about two hundred or more sections of range. Of course there were a lot of farmers in that section called Love's Bend who had little bunches of cattle and a few built wire fences around a section of land to locate some cattle that might stray off too far from home.

It was nothing uncommon to see Washington's chuck wagon make camp at some good watering place and from twenty-five to thirty cowhands come in for dinner or maybe make a stay of one or more days while working that part of their range.

When a cow outfit came into a certain part of the country to "work the range" it was always the custom to kill a fat yearling for beef but it was also the custom never to kill one of their own yearlings. It was always said a cowman could not eat his own beef as the other man's beef always tasted much better.

They would drive up a nice fat yearling close to the

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camp and someone would shoot it down and they then would skin out a hind quarter for their own use. Then they would invite the nearest neighbors to take the balance of the beef and use it. In those days one could not keep beef very long, especially in hot weather. The white people and Indians, too, would take the beef and cut it up in long thin slices and hang it in the hot sun on a long stick fixed up for that purpose and dry it. This was called "jerked beef". Most people were glad to see a big cow outfit come in the country as it was a sure sign they would get some fresh beef.

A cow outfit of say twenty or twenty-five men will eat a small beef in one or two days so in hot weather they would kill a fat yearling almost every day. That meant the settlers would get, at least, part of every beef they killed. In cold weather they could keep a beef until it was used up.

There was not so much work to do in the Winter months as no one ever fed any cattle in those days. Sometimes they would tear down some settler's fences and let the cattle eat up the stalk fields and sometimes they would

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pay the farmer something to look after the cattle in his own stalk field.

When the Indians were moved to the Indian Territory many of them had negro slaves and, of course, their slaves stayed with these Indians until they were set free after the Civil War. In the country just north of Gainesville there was the Love family or rather several families of the Loves and they all had slave negroes. When the slaves were set free some of them stayed with their former masters but most of them drifted upon Caddo Creek north of where Ardmore is now and the balance came on to Wild Horse Creek. Those negroes who settled on Wild Horse were such people as the Franklins, Henderson Williams' father, the Russells, Loves and the Prince negroes. Of course not any of the old slaves are living today, at least not many of them.

Many of the slave negroes became wealthy by raising cattle and horses as they had free access to as fine a range as there ever was in any country.