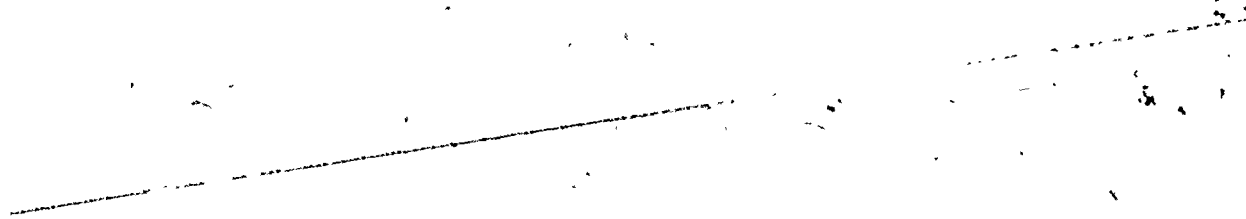


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Pete W. Cole,
Field Worker,
July 14, 1937.

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Interview with C. C. Rose, Pioneer,
Atoka, Oklahoma.

I was born in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and left with my parents when I was about three years of age and came to Indian Territory. We settled near Butcher Pen and Washita River, in what was then Panola County, now Johnston County in Chickasaw Nation. I have lived in Indian Territory all of my life since I came from Arkansas. When I was old enough to get out and work, I worked for several different parties and lastly I worked for Colonel Harris, father of Robert Harris who was a Governor of Chickasaw Nation. I was born on March 5, 1865, the year the Civil War ended.

Since I have been raised with the Choctaw Indians I am quite familiar with them as I have lived with them, had dealings with them and have experienced that their promises are true and that they expect the same in return. I have seen them in trouble among themselves but I do not care to give any account of their characters, the bad men, or their disposition although I have seen and witnessed some of the incidents as I was a Special Officer among them under Governor Green McCurtain for several years. I have been with them in most of their troubles, attended their meetings or

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their dances, and I remember one time when two men came into the house with Winchesters looking for trouble while the dance was in progress. I approached them, and in a friendly way escorted them out of the house and prevented trouble that might have happened.

When my parents came to the country, they landed first near Standing Rock in this County and the only thing we could do was to start farming by renting a piece of land from the owner. There was only one church in the community and that was the Presbyterian, but the people did not seem to have any interest in or did not care to attend church service. One time a man by the name of Henry Wilson, an Indian preacher, invited me to his church one Sunday. At service time he would read his text out of his Bible and preach to his congregation in his language. After he got through I would read my text out of the same chapter and verses and would preach to the whites that were present.

The minister would charge the congregation so much per sermon that the people did not care to pay or attend services until we organized our church and moved to Ward's Chapel a short distance from Standing Rock. When we moved to this place there were only three women and two men that helped organize the church with the help of Newman Powell, a minister from High Hill Community. This church had five

After the church was organized; we took up a collection by canvassing houses at Atoka, Lehigh, Coalgate and all nearby neighbors and it was not long until we had raised enough money to build a church. In the meantime boys and young men would get together on Sunday and would have their baseball games in front of the church while Sunday School and preaching were in progress.

There was an old church organ in the neighborhood that was given to the church, but it needed repairing. I took this organ and repaired it and brought it to the church when there was to be a protracted meeting. We began to have singing and the boys who played baseball in front of the church house during the services all took such interest in the singing that at every service they were present to take part in the singing. Several joined the church and were the best church workers that one could expect. It was in the year 1890 when the church was organized and prayer meetings held every week. Today the members of this church still maintain their prayer meeting and are still practicing what was taught them when their church was first organized.

I have five boys living and they are a doctor, druggist, Civil Engineer, and farmers. I moved to town so that these boys might finish school and they helped build a two story

twelve room house with a basement where we lived. There was an elm sprout that sprouted in the yard in front of the house thirty-five years ago. It still stands where the house was built, and is about two and one-half feet in diameter and about thirty-five feet high now.

The Choctaws are a superstitious class of people and believed in witchcraft so that when one of the members of the families died, sometimes one of the herb doctors would tell that some man or woman that ^{is or was} was a witch. They said that this person caused the death of one of the members of the family. Naturally the people would believe the story and someone would take his gun and hunt the so-called witch and shoot him or her. This was common until in the last few years the idea is dying out of their system and little or nothing is ever thought of a person being a witch now.

I have attended the Choctaw Courts, their wedding dinners, the Choctaw crys and have seen them whip a man tied to a tree for some crime that he had committed and was convicted of. I have my first woman to see being punished by whipping for the crime that has been committed by her. We understand that the Choctaw form of government ^{no} is/more, yet they did not believe in a woman committing a crime unless influenced by some man. If a crime was committed

under the influence of a man and this was so testified in the court then the man was implicated in the case and was of course tried and justice handed to him.

Long before Statehood a man was sent down here by the United States Government from Pennsylvania. He surveyed and mapped this country out and said that this was a great oil country and that some day oil would develop and gave the different structures and formation of the soil and oil that is underneath the soil. This was several years ago, but it is opening up according to the prediction of that man who studied and gave his opinion, and it is bound to be true, although no usher has been found as yet.