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Alfred F. Hicks,
Field Worker,

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Interview with Chas Secondine,
(Full-blood Indian) Delaware.) Nowata, Oklahoma.

The Last Ferry Boat In Nowata.

In the year of 1895 a man by the name of Paxton came to the Indian Territory to Nowata County, from up in Kansas and leased some land from a full-blood Indian by the name of Ab Ketchum on the Verdgris River, 1 mile north of what is Nowata, Oklahoma and 4 miles east. Mr. Paxton leased this claim from Ab Ketchum for ten years and was to do so much improvement and break up some of the land for farming. This man cut down some of the trees and made him a ferry boat out of the timber. He then went down to the river and made a crossing on the river so that people could cross when the river was not up, that is cross in wagons and buggies. This boat was large enough that a person could get two wagons and 4 head of horses on it at one time. They had a one inch iron cable stretched across the river and fastened to a large tree on each bank of the river and pulleys fastened to the cable and then to the boat. Often times the drift timber coming down the river would catch on the boat and would break the cable.

After Mr. Paxton's ten year lease was up, he turned the boat and all the improvements over to Mr. Ketchum.

Mr. Ketchum was not as good a ferryman as Mr. Paxton. He would not ferry anyone across the river after night, and this ferry was run three years by Ketchum and then in 1908 it was abandoned.

I remember one time after the oil field in Nowata County was opened up Mr. Ketchum refused to ferry two doctors across one night who were trying to get to two boys who had been burned in the oil fields. The doctors had to come on back to Nowata as there was no other way to get across, so just two nights after this the boat was blown up by dynamite by some of the friends of the two boys. This boat was replaced by Mr. Ketchum and he would ferry anyone across after this.

The County put in a bridge across the river in the year of 1908, just two miles south of this ford and then the old ferry was a thing of the past. Mr. Secondine who told me this story is a full-blood Delaware Indian.