

SEELEY, ALFRED J. INTERVIEW.

An interview with Alfred J. Seeley, Indian. 298
8 miles southwest of the city of Wilburton, Okla.
By Bradley Bolinger, Field Worker.

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EARLY INDIAN DAYS.

My father's name was John Seeley. I was born around what is known now as Panola, and have lived in what is Latimer County for 67 years. There was no town in this whole country when I was growing up. Just a trading post where all the country did what trading they had to do. There were not many white people lived here then.

The Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Rail Road came through this country around 1890 I believe. Later, it was taken over by the Rock Island R. R. Company.

There was an old Grist Mill run by a man named Loveless. The settlers would have to travel both ways around, 40 miles in a wagon or horseback, to get their meal ground. I lived 18 miles from this mill.

We had one race track. That is about all the pleasure we had in those days, and an Indian ball game or an Indian stomp dance sometimes. I used to have a pretty good pony that I carried to

the races. Had to ride it about 30 miles to get there. Had some good luck and some bad luck.

I have made a visit, or two to the Indian Court House that was located about 3 miles southwest of where the town of Wilburton is now located. There was not much law in this country then. Most of the officers were of Indian blood and were only looking after the behavior of the Indian tribe, and they were pretty rough on them sometimes. The Court House was situated on what is known as Bandy Creek now.

The Indians of this country trusted each other whether they were in trouble or not. I visited the Indian Court House the day Mitchell Anderson was executed for killing another Indian. They had the Judge and Jury, all full blood Indians. The prisoner was tried and found guilty. He was allowed to walk around the Court House grounds wherever he pleased until the next morning when he was to be shot for the murder of the other Indian. He stayed around the Court House and yard with but little watching until the next evening,

when the sheriff brought out a kind of a blanket and laid it on the ground. The prisoner was still loose there in the court yard, and the sheriff called him. The prisoner walked up and laid down on the blanket. The sheriff took off his shirt and marked a spot right over the prisoner's heart. Then the prisoner raised up to a sitting position. One deputy Indian sheriff held the right arm of the prisoner straight in the same manner. The Indian sheriff backed away from the prisoner about 12 yards, and used his personal revolver and shot the prisoner centering the little spot that was put on his breast. The prisoner was dead almost at once.

The Indians when they caught another Indian stealing, took them to the Indian sheriff and tried them at the Court House. If they were guilty, two Indian deputies would take him by the arms and march him out in the yard and put him against a tree with his arms stretched out in front of him and held by each deputy. It was the sheriff's duty to perform the whipping and he did.

When a man violated the Indian Law in those days, they did not wait long to try him. He was

tried the first thing after they caught him, and sentenced, when found guilty. The sentence was measured out immediately after the prisoner was found guilty.

There was a Stage Line running from Fort Smith to a place called then, Mountain Station. This is about 13 miles southwest of where Wilburton now is. They carried the mail in those days on horseback, as Mountain Station was the first post office to open in this country. I do not remember what year that was.

I remember when Jack McCurtain was Governor of the Choctaws, there was quite a bit of stock stealing in this country. This was done by whites and Indians. The White man was the head of the unlawfulness, and he managed to get the Indian to do the job.

The Indian sheriff had no way to arrest the whites in this country then because he only dealt with his tribe and the white man was pretty much his own boss when it came to unlawfulness. But the Indian sheriff kept pretty good control of the Indians
