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Locke, Victor M., Sr.

Johnson H. Hampton
Field Worker
May 14, 1937

An Interview with Jeff Sharp,
a white man. Antlers, Okla.

I was born in Tennessee on July 1, 1861 and came to Indian Territory in 1884. My parents were in Tennessee when I left home and came to this country with my family.

I came to Goodland, which was a little town on the Frisco Railroad, which was under construction but not finished when I landed there. I think the railroad was completed in 1886 or 87.

When I located in Goodland, there were no white people hardly at all. There were a few in town but none in the country. There were a good many Indians, some in town and some out in the country on farms. They did not have big farms but small farms which they called tomfuller patches.

I had heard of the Indian Country being a fine country so I just naturally wanted to come, and I knew that it afforded better opportunities for a young man so I came over to the new country to get a start in life. It sure was

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a good country. We did not have to work hard to make a good living for our families.

My family and I came over on the train and when we landed at Goodland, I rented a small box house. We did not have any furniture to go in it but I got what furniture we needed and we set up housekeeping. I landed a job as clerk in one of the stores. As I said, there were no white people there so we did our trading with the Indians. Selling them everything they wanted. They would order guns, rifles, pistols and some shotguns for them but very few shotguns for they all wanted rifles and pistols.

The Indians there nearly all had lots of cattle, hogs and ponies. They were not worth much and there were no market for things like that but they would sell them anyway in order to buy guns. They would sell anything to get a gun. They did not bother any of the white people but they sure would fight among themselves, and sometimes they would have a gun battle and kill one or maybe two, but it was among themselves. They never did bother the

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white people that I know.

My experience with Indians has been satisfactory. I have lived among the Choctaws ever since I came to the Indian Territory and in my dealings with them I find that they are honest, and meet every obligation they make. You could depend on their word for they would not make an obligation they could not meet, and they regard their word as the word of honor.

I left Goodland and went to Antlers, Oklahoma when it was still Indian Territory.

When I landed in this country, there was lots of wild game such as deer and turkey and lots of fish in the creeks, and there were some bears in the mountains. If we wanted fresh meat, all we had to do was to get out and get what we wanted for fresh eating.

Sometime in 1893, the Indians had a battle with one another. I don't know what it was about, but they came to Antlers, and shot up Locke's house. Mr. Locke had five or six Indians with him in the house when they rode up and the fight

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started. It was called the Jones and Locke war, I don't think there was anyone killed in this war but there lots of shots fired and after the battle Mr. Locke got up his followers and they made camp across the Kiamichi River. He must have had about 200 Indians there, camped there ready for the fight, and they were all furnished guns and ammunition. The other side were camped at Goodland but before they got together United States Soldiers were sent down to stop the war. One Company was sent, and they camped here in Antlers. The Captain and others went and had a talk with the leaders, and finally got them to lay down their guns and go home. So that was the last of the war. That is the only time the Choctaw Indians took up arms against one another.

I never did have any trouble with any of the Choctaw Indians. They always treated me just fine and I have lots of friends among them. I have lived among the Choctaws ever since I moved here. There used to be lots of Indians here, but a great many have died, and now there

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are not many of the fullbloods living.

I have been to several cries, and attended their meetings, but, I never saw the ball game in action. I have heard of the game and from what I hear it must have been a tough game, especially when they would use their ball sticks for a club.

I have lived here for these many years, and I expect to live here the balance of my days, as I am getting old and feeble.