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In Interview with Lynch Sixkiller

By W. J. B. Bigby, S-149,

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Lynch Sixkiller, a Cherokee Indian was born October 2, 1879, in Flint District, Cherokee Nation, about five miles south of the present town of Stilwell, Okla. His father, Sam Sixkiller, and his mother, Nancy Lessly Sixkiller, were born in the Indian Territory, in Flint Bistrict. They were both Cherokees. Lynch Sixkiller attended school at what is now Dahlenegah school, in a small log house, with a fireplace to furnish the heat.

At the age of about twenty-three, he married Miss Maggie McCoy, a Cherokee.

He engaged in farming, near where he was born, and grew small acreages of corn, cotten, oats and vegetables. He says that when he was a boy that the nearest market for cotton was at Van Buren, Arkansas. Most of the trading of the family was done at Evansville, Arkansas, and later at Dannenburg's store, at about the site of the present town of Stilwell.

Mr. Sixkiller says that hunting was quite a sport then and the game also furnished much food. He remembers his father killing several deer but says that he never killed one himself.

He says the Stomp Dance was one of the great features of the early days. He says that the main place for the Stomp Dance was at Candy Mink's Spring, in the south part of what in now Adair County, Oklahoma. The Stomp Dance was enjoyed by all the people.

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It would last for several days and the people would be there from many parts of the country. He does not remember much about the rules of the dance, but says that the women wore shells, which made a tapping sound and that the men and women all danced around a fire, chanting something in their own language. At these dances there was always plenty to eat, the feast was one of the main features.

The old "Rail Mauling" was another thing enjoyed by the folks in early days. He says that when a man wished to make a new farm, he would invite his friends to meet there at some specified day and bring their axes, wedges and mauls. Sometimes the man who wished the land cleared would have mauls and gluts made so that the work would not be hindered if the extra ones were needed during the day and sometimes he would have some timber already cut the length of rails in order to get more rails made. The whole family came along with the men for it was a day of enjoyment as well as work. The visiting women always assisted in preparing the big meal for the noon hour. There were always prizes given and the one who could win the first prize was highly honored. The man who made the most rails during the day received first prize of One dollar in money ; the one who made second received a plug of Star tobacco ; and

the one who scored third received a cake. Many times there would be a party given the night following the rail mauling.

House raisings, the putting up of the log walls, were also done by one's friends and there was always a feast at the noon hour. Mr. Sixkiller says that the people enjoyed themselves as well then as now, only in a different way.