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Interview with Mr. Jake Simmons  
as given to L. W. Wilson, Indian-  
Pioneer History.

This interview covers all the information known to Jake Simmons, which includes his personal activities and of that revealed to him by his parents and grandparents. His good wife, Rose Simmons, assisted him as far as possible in substantiating exact locations, dates, etc.

Mr. Simmons states that he was born at Boggy Depot on the Fort Washita River near Fort Washita in the month of September, 1865, and that he is now near 72 years of age.

His wife Rose Jefferson-Simmons is now 79 years of age and was born in the Red River country of the Indian Territory.

His father, Jim Simmons, came from Kansas and Missouri in 1851 and became an adopted Cherokee Citizen in the Indian Territory and died in the Flat Rock Country of the Cherokee Nation in 1875. At the outbreak of the Civil War he was enlisted in the Confederate Army.

His mother Lucy Perryman was born near the old Vann Cemetery, then known as Gatesville, Indian Territory, and was later called Choski bottoms which is about six or seven miles east of the present town of Haskell. This was at the time of her birth near what was known as Mose Perryman's plantation and she

is a half sister to John Harrison, who is of Negro descent.

Mr. Simmons is of Cherokee from his father's side, Creek, and negro from his mother's side and his grandparents were of Cherokee and Creek descent.

#### MIGRATION BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

The Creek, or what was known as the Muskogee Indians, living in Georgia and Alabama were assigned to lands between the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers long before they were removed to the Indian Territory. Some of them begin moving West as early as 1825. This removal was necessary, due to the white man wanting to settle up the present states of Alabama and Georgia.

Most of the Creeks did not want to move for they loved the land in which their ancestors had lived all their lives and their loved ones were buried there, which also added to their not wanting to leave. The Creeks as a whole were not consulted much and fraud was used and treaties signed which the Government finally forced and those who refused to go were driven out like so many cattle and made to come here to the Indian Territory. The Creeks were very much peeved, dissatisfied and mad at the ones making the treaties. My grandparents have told me that the Creeks were so mad that they killed a fellow by the name of McIntosh, a half-breed, who was instrumental in getting these treaties signed.

A few of the Creeks, who came at the instance of the treaties of their own free accord and will, were taken by the Government to New Orleans, Louisiana, and then by steamboat up the Mississippi River and then the Arkansas River to Webb's Falls, Indian Territory, and Fort Gibson, Indian Territory. This part of migration started in 1836. In 1837, those who refused to go were driven through the Country. This part of the migration consisted of Caravans and Wagon trains. They suffered many hardships, were foot sore and weary, ragged, tattered and torn by the long treks; much sickness among them and many died along the way and were buried in un-marked graves. After they arrived here the only thing they had with which to make a living was given to them by the U.S. troops which was a flint and steel with which to start a fire, a big eyed hoe, and ax, some corn and a few other little articles together with a few little things that they had gathered together which they had back in the old Country (meaning back in Alabama). They were moved by the United States troops, they had to go or die. They took their only alternative, moved west, leaving their rich fertile farms back east. Many died of sorrow and home-sickness, even after they reached the Indian Territory. My grandparents have told me that children were born on this move but that not halt the

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move in the least, as the women was placed in the wagon without delay, possibly only a day before the birth of the child, while prior to then she walked and marched the best she could, often wading streams up to her neck and when the streams were deeper than this, the women, together with the rest of them, were put across the rivers in little boats, made sometimes of hollow logs if all of the Army boats and little skiffs were in use.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CREEKS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

They finally reached the land of the Indian Territory, but it was much unlike the promised land spoken of in the Bible, for it was not one of milk and honey, nor did it rain manna from heaven.

With their ax they set about cutting down trees and building log cabins and clearing land for cultivation. Some of these cabins were built of logs stood on ends, others were layed horizontally. The roofs were thatched (built of limbs and grass), some of the roofs were made of clap boards split out with the ax. They had no nails and these shingles or clapboards were held on by laying logs at intervals to hold them.

Their crops were planted with the hoe. They would dig a hole, drop the corn and cover it with the hoe. Cultivation was continued with the hoe.

They conceived the idea of grinding their corn with what we still call a mortar and pestle. They would take a log about

four feet long, dish it out on one end and stand it on end with the dish up and with the pestle or ram they could crush the corn that was placed in the mortar.

Their clothing was of skins and furs.

Their food was game, fish, berries and wild fruit.

Their weapons was the bow and arrow. The bow was usually made from Bois De Arc and the string from a squirrel skin or deer sinew. The arrows were usually made of swamp Dogwood. The arrows were sharpened at one end so they would easily pierce and stick into any animal that they struck.

Missionaries came with the Creeks and labored among them, teaching and preaching to them but it was hard for them to preach the gospel because the most of them thought that hell could have been no worse than they had experienced. The Missionaries' ever trying efforts succeeded in the erection of Churches or Missions, and in these Missions was preached the faith of God. These Missionaires were of Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian faiths. The English language was taught in the missions and schools.

Roads were being traveled to the States. The Texas road from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory to Texas. The old Military road into Kansas and Missouri to Fort Gibson. The California road to California starting from Fort Smith, Arkansas.

The Arbuckle road from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory to Fort Washita.

The military posts were built in which soldiers were garrisoned. Fort Coffee down on the Red River. Fort Wayne up in the Spavinaw hills, now Delaware County, Oklahoma. Fort Washita in the Arbuckle Mountains. You remember I told you I was born there. Fort Gibson now Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. There were other forts but I cannot recall them at this time.

#### LIFE AND CUSTOMS BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

Twenty-five years rolled around and the grusome times of immigration and settlement were only related to the younger generation and the older ones were becoming more reconciled. They had acquired cattle, horses, oxen, hogs, and some sheep, all of which were raised on the open range. They had small fields of corn, wheat and cotton. There were slave owners who had slaves like the states of the South. Many of the colored race as well as the whites had married into the Creek tribe, and many of these mixed-bloods had large farms and stock ranches. People were becoming educated in the Missions and by private tutors and when they had finished here, many of them were sent to Kansas, and back East to complete their education of higher learning.

Most of the people lived in log cabins of one and two rooms with a large fire place in each room. If they were two-room

cabins, these fire places were usually built of native stone, some had puncheon floors, others dirt floors, shake shingle roofs, shuttle windows, and the better to-do people had frame or brick that was carted down from Kansas by mule and ox team. The people lived a simple life, raising their food and making their clothing. They killed and cured their own meat, ground their own corn, cotton was raised for home use. Being no gins, the seeds were picked out of the cotton by hand. They had their spinning wheel, reels and looms. Cotton was corded, spun, bolted, and woven. My wife can tell you more about this than I can for she and the women folks did most of this work. Our clothing was dyed with barks boiled to a liquid and the thread dyed before it was woven. Some of the barks used for this purpose was Sycamore, Red Oak, Sumac to which was added a little bit of coperas, the coperas would keep the color from fading too badly. Coperas and Indigo was purchased at a trading post. With Indigo could be made any and all shades of blue.

The people enjoyed sports and would fish, hunt, dance, horse race, ball games, rabbit chases, and foot races.

As a whole the people were of hospitable nature and delighted in visiting friends and neighbors, going to parties, barbecues, camp meetings, and should a neighbor be sick they would all meet and gather his little crop, build him a house



and do for each other.

The population never grew so extensively but what most of the country was in its original condition. Wild game of all kinds were always plentiful, namely buffalo, deer, bear, squirrel, rabbit, turkeys, wild pigeons, raccoon, O'possum, skunks, mink, muskrats, coyotes, fox, etc. You will see from the different variety of game that there was plenty of wild game for food as well as for furs. Skins and furs were almost a medium of exchange for household necessities and food. Fur buyers and peddlers would make it to the trading post, and go through the country and buy or exchange their wares for furs and hides.

The streams continued full of all specie of soft water fish.

In Autumn, there was plenty of nuts, namely pecans, hickory nuts, walnuts, and chinquapins.

Wild fruit and berries were also plentiful, namely: blackberries, dewberries, strawberries, huckleberries, cherries, plums, and mulberries. The culture of fruit trees was little known on account of so many wild berries and fruits.

Mission schools increased, education improved and Bible societies were organized.

I know that my people were civilized and it stands to

reason that if they were, the rest of the Creeks must have been and there was no comparison between them and the wild Indians which I came in contact with in my lifetime.

#### CIVIL WAR

The beginning of the Civil War found the Creek Indians in a very comfortable condition. Many white and colored people had married into the tribe and became citizens of the tribe. All the Creeks having come from the South and many being slave owners at the time of the removal, naturally pursued the same lines in their new lands. Slavery led to the outbreak of the Civil War between the states of the North and the States of the South, but the Creeks preferred to not take sides with either, remembering well how they lived and strived in the years past to climb to the top to acquire what they possessed and the peace that reigned among them. The Government of the Confederacy and that of the Union sought to make treaties with the Creeks to fight either on this side or that. The Creeks did not and absolutely was not persuaded. They wanted to have nothing to do with it but as time passed on, some of them yielded one way or the other. Most of the Chiefs or agents of the tribe were southern men and through Albert Pike, Confederate Commissioner, made a treaty with one faction of the Creeks to fight with the South.

My father was one of this faction to join the Southern Army and my folks moved to Fort Washita where I was born. There was another faction of the Creeks under the leadership of an old Creek Chief named Opothle Yahola who refused to be bound by the treaty and started to take refuge in Kansas. This very much angered Albert Pike and the Confederacy, because they thought it was this faction's intentions to join the Union Army but in fact they did not really want to fight for either side. These Creeks got all their earthly possessions together, it was along in the late fall of the year, I believe it was in November 1861, and they started their journey to Kansas. They did not have weapons to defend themselves in anything like comparison with those of the soldiers. They followed the old Buffalo trail a few miles west of the present towns of Eufaula, Checotah, Muskogee, Wagoner, and Pryor, Oklahoma, into Coffeeville, Kansas. Confederate Colonels D. H. Cooper, and J. M. McIntosh, pursued and attacked them. They suffered loss untold and finished their trip into Kansas in the dead of the winter in a terrible storm, sick, dying, and destitute. After reaching there they had to join the Union Army and they were willing for they were much angered at the Confederacy because they attacked them. Some of my people were among these Creeks and that explains why some of my

relatives of today are Republican and some are Democrat.

In 1862, in July, some of the Creeks joined the Union Army and regiments were formed under General James Blunt and occupied Fort Gibson and they remained under the Union troops throughout the War. Likewise, some of the Creeks, and most of them for that matter, were with the Confederate. Regiments were organized and stationed at Fort Washita along with other troops of whites out of Texas, and other Forts in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nation. Raiding parties from both sides scoured the country, burning houses, and cabins, driving off horses and cattle and in fact destroying and demolishing everything they could find.

There were only a few battles fought in the Indian Territory, that was in the Creek Nation. Near the present town of Wainwright, Oklahoma, on Elk Creek, was camped the Confederate Army. I would say it was about half way between Wainwright and Oktaha, Oklahoma. The Union Army stationed at Fort Gibson sent spies and located them. Rube Childers was the principal one of the spies and he returned to Fort Gibson and gave the information to General Blunt and the Union Army proceeded to close in on them. The Confederate Army was under General William Steele and General Doug Cooper. The Union Army had maneuvered to within range of the attack and on that

July morning, General Blunt mounted on his fiery steed, at the break of day, viewed the two armies now arrayed in position for battle. It was a clear bracing day, mellow with the richness of mid-summer. All at once a smoke rose, a thunder shook the ground, and a chorus of shouts, and groans yelled along in the twilight air. Thus it was all day long wherever General Blunt went there followed victory and at last toward the setting of the sun the crisis of the conflict came, the two armies, that of the Union and that of the Confederates, gave their very all to crush their opponents. The Confederates were forced to retreat Southward across the Canadian River into the darkness of the wilderness, thus a victory for General Blunt commanding the Union Army.

Later on during the war, the Confederate surprised a Union Army wagon train of supplies on the Military trail out of Kansas near Grand river at about the present town of Pensacola, Oklahoma, they captured the wagon train of over three hundred wagons and a large number of prisoners. This surprise attack was pulled by General Stand Watie of the Confederate Army.

There was a Confederate Fort called Fort Davis west of Ft. Gibson on the north bank of the Arkansas river. Generals Stand Watie, Cooper, and Gano occupied this Fort.

I don't recall much that I have been told about Fort Davis

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but I believe it was in the summer of 1862, it was burned by General Blunt Army of the Union Forces. You see that was another encounter in the Creek Nation. It seems that the Creek Nation had all the battles and naturally suffered greater losses than did the other Nations.

I do recall my father telling me that on account of unsanitary conditions, both armies suffered immensely from diseases of smallpox, cholera, and other epidemics.

The Civil War was on in which the Creek Indians and I guess the other tribes would have not participated for they were not concerned but were subjects of persuasion. It was disastrous to them from start to finish, for their property was destroyed and many of them lost their lives and in the end much of their land was taken from them. Their slaves were set free which was of little loss compared with the other losses I have told you about.

#### RECONSTRUCTION AFTER CIVIL WAR AND OTHER TRIBES MOVED TO THE TERRITORY

The closing of the war found the Creek nation in a more pitiable condition than the rest of the Nation of the Five Tribes due, as I have said, to the most activities of the war being centered in the Creek Nation. Homes destroyed, horses, oxen, and cattle killed or driven off, and besides adjusting dif-

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ferences with the Cherokee and Seminoles, a peace conference was held at Fort Smith, Arkansas, in the Fall of 1865. I believe it was in September that year. All tribes were present and they finally agreed with the Government that unused lands that had been theirs would be made into reservations for Indians of Kansas, Nebraska, and other places and that the negro slaves should be citizens of the tribes, right-of-ways granted for railroads and tribal Governments set up under the United States' supervision. When the lands were given to other Indians it naturally reduced the acreage and the negro also acquired ownership in the land as much as the Creeks themselves and enjoyed part of the tribal funds. Each tribe had certain understandings as to what the slave negro would get. After the Fort Smith meeting it was taken to Washington and was discussed pro and con for a long time before it was all thrashed out.

For ten years or more after the war people was very busy building cabins and re-establishing themselves. Railroads started building and the people as a whole were beginning to recuperate from the losses sustained by the Civil War.

Tribes of what we called wild Indians begin to move in to the Indian Territory. The Sac and Fox came to the Creek

Nation. The Delawares, Shawnees, Osages, Quapaws, Kaws, Pawnees, and Senecas in the Cherokee Nation and in fact all the Nations of the Five Tribes got their part of the different Indians from whence they came. The Delaware and Shawnee Indian eventually became citizens of the Cherokee Nation and were friendly and peaceable among the Cherokees who adopted them, and this was also true of the Sac and Fox Indian in the Creek Nation. There was more or less trouble all of the time between the Kiowas, Comanches, Osages, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and other wild Indians and it became necessary for the Government to rehabilitate their forts and maintain soldiers to suppress the uprisings and lawlessness, which not only disturbed them but kept all of the other people in fear. Some of these Forts were Fort Cobb down in present Caddo County, Fort Sill near our present town of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Fort Gibson at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and I believe there was a Fort at the present town of Fort Dodge, Kansas, that took care of the Indians along the Kansas line. Armies were also stationed at other points in the Territory that I cannot recall at this time.

The soldiers at last subdued and confined them to reservations and little trouble was experienced thereafter and



at this time people started driving cattle from Texas through the Country to market them in Kansas, Missouri, and other states.

CATTLE TRADE BETWEEN TEXAS AND NORTHERN MARKETS.

I have from the time I was a little boy been interested in the cattle business and I have studied it from every angle from its beginning to its present day. I never did much farming in my life; that is, extensively as I have always worked on the range and ranches and am still today engaged in the raising of cattle on my miniature ranch of eleven hundred acres, compared with the ranches in my early manhood.

After the war, cattle were very expensive on the northern markets and were scarce in those parts, while in Texas, cattle covered the plain and prairie by myriads. There were no facilities to market these cattle, other than to drive them through, and this they tried by grazing them through the Territory to points in Kansas. They suffered great losses with their herd and more so when the Texas cattle came in to Kansas and spread what they called the Texas fever among the native cattle of that State. The farmers along the trail objected seriously to this method and went about in a way unlawful to stop it. They would sometimes take the cow punchers and hang them, and would cause the cattle to stampede in order to break

up this practice. The cattle were kept moving at first with little halt, through the territory and those that did get through were very thin, foot sore and weary, and were anything but ready for the market.

Having failed in this system they took to the idea of grazing them slowly through, taking possibly eight or nine months. There was plenty of Blue stem grass, sage grass, and buffalo grass, and by slowly grazing them they would be rolling fat when they arrived in Kansas and they would be fit for the market. This proved much more practicable, the cattle would gradually become more acclimated and be in the pink of condition. I have seen thousands and thousands of these cattle on the plains and prairies being grazed and driven through the land to market to Wichita, Kansas and Abilene, Kansas, where the railroads would handle them. It was during these days that a trail was blazed by a half-breed Cherokee who had refuged in Kansas and started selling goods and supplies that he hauled in wagons to the Wild Indians on the plains between Wichita, Kansas, and the Washita River. His name was Jess Chisholm and they called the route he traveled the Chisholm trail and this became notorious to all the cattle men because they followed practically this trail from Texas to Kansas. I used to travel this trail some and would come into it at what is now known

as Cleveland, Oklahoma. This method of marketing cattle ceased in about 1875 and ranches were set up on the plains on unassigned land, I mean by unassigned lands, lands which had not been assigned and was known and called Government land.

#### STARTING OF OKLAHOMA CATTLE RANCHES

With the subduing of the wild Indians, buffalo herds disappearing and the railroad operating, cattle were shipped from Texas to the Indian Territory and by 1880 ranches of all sizes and description were in progress. These Texas cattle were of all sizes and colors, long\*horns, Mexican types, etc. Some were wild and half-wild and many of them were branded before arrival in the territory which necessitated each ranch maintaining a brand record. Each ranch had its particular range and some of these ranges over-lapped, like the Lazy S, would over-lap the F. S. and so on. I will tell you of these and other ranches later on.

On each new ranch were a number of buildings which consisted of the superintendent or foreman's house, cook shacks, bund houses, sheds and corrals. Most of these buildings were built of log and corral of split rail. I know of one ranch where lumber was hauled from Kansas to build a house for the owner so that he could have for himself a plank house. The

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lumber was hauled by ox team to the ranch.

Employees on the ranch consisted of superintendent or Foreman, cow punchers, horse wranglers, cooks, and salt boys who kept up the salt licks. The number of employees varied in accordance with the size of the ranch.

We would have our spring and fall roundup and the cattle driven to their home range that did not belong to us. We could tell the way branded to whom they belonged. On these roundups we would always take the chuck wagon along and would be gone from home some two or three weeks at a time. We cooked and ate at no particular spot, being just the time where we were caught and at night we would roll up in our blankets and sleep on the ground. Got up at break of day, get out chuck, in the saddle and start riding again. All calves would be branded and we knew ours from the rest because they would be following their mothers that were in our brand. Those that were not following the mothers of our brand but of other brands would be driven along with their mothers to their home range.

The range hands, all of them, were jolly good fellows. They dressed picturesquely with large brim hats with high crowns, a large handkerchief around their necks, high heel boots, shirts usually of some bright color and shaps over

their trousers. This was the comfortable dress for the cow punchers and each had its particular part in a cowboy's life. The hats were used to protect them from the rays of the sun and they were beneficial in heading off a cow or starting a bucking bronco. The handkerchief which they wore about their necks were often used in caring for their wounds and those of the Doggies, the high heel boots kept their feet from slipping through the stirrup on their saddle and the chaps protected their trousers and legs from the whipping of the high grass which at times was half high to the sides of a horse and the heavy shirts not only protected them from the sun but from insects bites of all kinds. Little education and refinement was among them. They loved to play pranks on each other and, not because I was a cow puncher myself, I am compelled to say that they were brave men, hated a thief and a coward and despised lawlessness in any form.

The cattlemen formed an organization up at Caldwell, Kansas along in 1881 and I favored it very much because I knew that soon the Cherokee Strip and the Oklahoma Country would be opened to white settlers, due to much talk and we cattlemen bitterly opposed it because we knew it would tear up our ranches and bring the cattle industry to another degree of dissatisfaction, making it unprofitable.

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I remember when only a mere boy of my first job on the ranch and for this job I was paid six dollars a month; later on, I received ten dollars a month and so on until I begin to know my cattle and became a buyer and bought thousands of head for the ranch where I was employed and by this means and my allotment, etc., I myself engaged in the cattle business. I will tell you more of that later.

OPENING OF OKLAHOMA COUNTRY IN 1889

In what is now Oklahoma County and a number of other counties surrounding was a number of large ranches. People came into this part of the Oklahoma Country because they called it Government land and unassigned and said they could homestead it. The Government troops had their hands full moving them off for a period of about five years and then in 1889 it was opened to white settlers. I never participated in this run of 1889 or other runs at later dates because I was a citizen and like other citizens of the tribe I objected as well as the cattlemen. It was opened by Congress on April 22, 1889, designated as the day it would be opened and people came from far and near with covered wagons, ponies, buck-boards, buggies and by train (the Santa Fe railroad had built through the Oklahoma Country in about the year 1886 and this accounts for those coming by train.) They had all kinds of conveyances

and contraptions and camped along the line waiting for the designated hour to come. The soldiers fired the cannon, which was the signal for the race to start. Each settler knew that the first one to a certain point and drove his stake, it would be his claim and he could homestead it and live there and own it. It was a terrible race, in some cases, it was pathetic and in others it was laughable. There were cook stoves, chairs, bedsteads, bedding and clothing scattered all over the prairie as well as pieces of wagons, buggy wheels and harness. Their household effects were bounced out of the wagon as they sped across the prairie and the wagons and buggies and harness were torn up by runaway teams and horses. By nightfall of that day, there seemed to be someone who claimed every hundred and sixty acres in that vast tract.

They soon started plowing, planting corn and gardens, digging wells and building log cabins and in some instances sod houses took the place of their tents. Tent City sprang up, then frame buildings and it was only a short time until Guthrie was the largest town in the Oklahoma Territory and eventually became the Capitol. The Government soon established land offices at Guthrie and Kingfisher to settle disputes of the settlers.

NEED OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE SETTLER

In all the excitement and arguments in congress of opening up this land to settlers and the settlers making the race, they learned quickly that the laws for the Indians did not fit into their life. The people as a whole were orderly and law abiding but they needed laws, and Congress forgot that. The towns sought to elect Mayors, Police and city Council. Elections were held and officers were elected. I could tell a lot of funny things about these elections because they were quite different in those days compared to what they are at the present time. At any rate, they elected their officers and knew well that there were no statutes to back it up like they had in the states from which they came. The next year, 1890, Congress finally placed into effect what was known as the Organic laws; such as, other territories had lived under until they were admitted as a state. The Organic law gave them three branches of government, Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. The President of the United States appointed at first a Secretary to the Territory, three Supreme Court Judges, a Legislative council and representative all to be elected for two years. During these next two years many things happened with the Government secretaries resigned, Supreme Court Judges increased as well as other officials and at last



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the Nebraska law was adopted. The white settlers had troubles all their own. Some could not make a living on the places and had to give it up; others would send some member of their family back home from where they came to work and get a grub stake for those here in the territory. Their menu consisted mainly of corn bread, salt pork, beans and molasses. Schools had to be started, Churches erected, wells dug and it was many miles to a store or trading post, and if they got any mail once a month it was sure luck. But as time rolled on, they progressed slowly but surely and of course made it what it is today.

#### DIVISION OF OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

It was provided by the Organic law that the Indian Territory would be divided and in about 1891, it was divided and all the land East of about the center line of the territory drawn from north to south was called Indian Territory and all west of this line was called Oklahoma Territory. Of course, the Five Tribes including the Osages, Sac, Fox, Quapaws, and other little tribes were in the Indian Territory. Oklahoma Territory now had its own officers separate from the Indian Territory and some of their Governors as I remember were George Steele, Charley Barnes, A. J. Seay, and others, before

statehood, the Capitol was at Guthrie and the Capitol for the Indian Territory was at Tahlequah. The Indian Territory still had its Indians laws but the Organic law provided for Federal Court at Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the Judge of that Court was Judge Parker. I believe there was also a Federal court at Wichita, Kansas. It was in 1893, Congress provided for a commission, to treat with the Five Tribes to give up Tribal Government and not hold their lands as common property but to accept allotments of land and become citizens of the United States, instead of Citizens of each tribe. This commission was known as the Dawes Commission and Henry Dawes was the first Commissioner or rather the first Chairman of the Commission. It took some time for this Commission to begin to function. Surveyors came into the territory and begin to lay townships, towns and villages, etc. Quite a little while, I would say five years, after the Dawes Commission went into effect before allotments were made. I enrolled. I believe in 1898 and filed for my hundred and sixty acres in 1899. Each one of my children did likewise. I, nor any of them, experienced any difficulty in proving up as we were all born here and everybody knew we were citizens. I enrolled at Okmulgee, Indian Territory.

CHEROKEE STRIP OPENING IN 1893

The Cherokee Strip was opened to white settlers in 1893 and was handled in about the same manner as I have told you about the opening of the Oklahoma Country. The people were eager then to settle as they were in 1889. The Cherokee Strip covered the land which is known at present as Kay, Grant, Woods, Woodard, Garfield, Noble and Pawnee. Now that makes seven counties doesn't it? If it does, I think that was what comprised the land with the Cherokee Strip. Conflicting claims, quarrels, disputes, and lawsuits were seemingly more noticeable to me in the Cherokee Strip run than that of 1889 but may be it was because I got a newspaper oftener then to read about it.

The people in the Cherokee Strip did not experience the need of statute laws in order for them to set up their local governments, for Congress had provided for same.

These settlers had their trouble too. Like the others, they had to build houses, start farming, building schools and churches, digging wells, etc. Their buildings were log, frame and sometimes the walls were of sod.

STATEHOOD

The people just could not get satisfied with the territory laws. They chose to elect their own officers to rule them instead of the territory laws. People out of the Ter-

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ritory were sent in by the Government to rule and did not know or have any idea of the conditions that existed in the Territory. As far back as 1891, people began to want the Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory taken in as one great State. They quarreled and fussed and fumed around for a length of time and some wanted just Oklahoma Territory as a state and leave the Indian Territory as it was. The people continued to argue not only here in the Territory but also at Washington. In 1905, the Tribes called a convention at the Muskogee Indian Territory (and while I think of it we used to call Muskogee, Arkansas Town), on August 21, to form a Constitution for a state composed of Indian Territory separate to that of the Oklahoma Territory. Our Creek Chief, Pleasant Porter, a neighbor of mine for years and with whom I had been deer hunting many times, was selected and elected President of that convention and we had a Creek Poet by the name of Alex Posey who was elected Secretary. Out of the Five Tribes I believe all sent delegates to the convention, except possibly one, and I believe that the one absent was the Chickasaw Tribe. Of course, Sequoyah was a Cherokee and it was he who composed the Cherokee alphabet and, in order to pay tribute to him, they voted to call the Indian Territory the State of Sequoyah and it was to have forty-eight counties. The result

of this convention was brought by representatives of the Five Tribes before Congress but for some reason they never acted.

Now you see Oklahoma Territory wanted a separate state, the Indian Territory wanted a separate state and neither one got what they tried to get. In 1907, a bill was passed in Washington to include both Territories into one state and that it should be called Oklahoma. Delegates from the Indian Territory and the Oklahoma Territory met at Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory, and both Territories did become one state. I have heard people say that Oklahoma became a state in 1907, but I claim it was 1908 because the officials did not take office until January 1, 1908.

#### INDIAN CUSTOMS

The Indians food consisted of pork, all kinds of wild game, bread and hominy grits. They did their cooking in skillets and pots. Sometimes it was on the open fire outside and sometimes in the fireplace until cook stoves came in.

Their dishes and some of their cooking utensils were made of clay, that is they made clay plates, cups, bowls, and pots. Out of these dishes they would eat their sand food and in the pots they could boil food with accuracy.

They made dyes for their clothing, and paints for their faces and their ponies, by boiling down bark of trees to a

liquid for their clothing; and in this liquid they would stir a certain amount of starch made from corn which made a paste they they would rub on their faces and ponies as they desired. I have also seen them use certain rocks with which to make paint for their faces. The dyes were usually made from oak bark, Sycamore bark and various barks together with Indigo and copperas.

Indian medicines were made from roots and herbs. Bone set which the Creeks called Angelica was used for a purgative and likewise button snake root used for the same purpose, Dogwood root and butterfly root including goldenrod were used as you would use quinine to break a fever. Frost root and a root they called Doctor Dick root was used as a medicine. Mythical medicine was used at their stomp dances, and while it was called "mythical medicine" it was nothing more than medicine used to make them vomit so that their bodies and souls would be cleansed before they engaged in the eating of roasting ears and barbecued meats. I will add that they fasted for three days before they were given the medicine which made them vomit. The stomp dance which I attended was in July of each year and was over on the old S. F. Ranch.

The Indians were very artistic and many of them delighted in the work of art. From clay they made pottery of all kinds,

namely: plates, pots, bowls, miniature statues of dogs, ponies, cows, etc. They made baskets of all kinds from the barks of trees and some of these baskets were nicely colored with dyes made from barks as I have told you of before. I remember well that I made my horse collars out of corn shucks by taking a cow hide, tanning it, cutting it to the size desired and stuffing it full of corn shucks. I have many times, when I did not have a cow hide tanned with which to make lines with which to drive my horses, used hickory bark. Of course this bark would be cut into strips and plaited. Riddles, ladles or sometimes called fanners, were made from the bark of cane, hickory, or white oak trees.

I belong to the Creek tribe and that part of the tribe which was known as the Perryman tribe, even though my father was a Cherokee, mother was a Creek and I don't know why, but I just followed my mother's side of the family. I suppose though it was because, when father went to war, mother took me to Fort Washita. You know as well as I that a mother had more to say about the child and its raising than the father.

I attended school some but very little and my education is limited, I might say, however, that most of my learning is practical and not from books. I attended the old Asbury Mission, later called the Eufaula school. It stood in the yard

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of my mother, and my teacher's name was Mrs. McIntosh. This school no longer exists. I also attended the Tallahassee Mission. Mr. Robinson had charge of this school and, after his death, he was succeeded by Miss Alice <sup>Robertson,</sup> ~~Robinson~~, who in later years became Congresswoman from the state of Oklahoma. The Black Jack is located at present about seven miles west and three miles north of the present city of Muskogee. Dr. Williams was a teacher of this school. Joe Perryman who later became the Creek Chief of the Cherokee Nation also attended school in my mother's yard at Eufaula.

When we would go on hunting trips it would usually be for the purpose of hunting wild hogs and to have fun. Our favorite hunting ground was on the Verdigris river above Wagoner at what we called the Childer's place. Another favorite place of ours was on the Cimmaron river near what is now the present town of Red Fork, just out of Tulsa a short ways.

My parents told me that before the war they did all of their trading at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, as that was their nearest location but after the war and peace was declared and the negroes freed, we used to trade at the old Creek Agency which was located on the mouth side of Fern Mountain which is three miles northwest of Muskogee, Okla-



home, and near the present J. Garfield Buell country home. There were, at first, two stores at this agency or trading post. One was owned by a Mr. Adkinson and the other by a Mr. Patterson. Later on, two more stores were built, I cannot recall the owners' names at this time. The Hotel was run by a colored woman, whom we called Big Sarah. Big Sarah fed and slept both white and colored as well as the Indians. This was a thriving little village and a number of families lived there; some of their names were Peter Stidman and Family, Simon Brown and family, Joe Davis and family, Tobe McIntosh and family, Nap Wiseman and family, and many others that I cannot recall but at the <sup>time</sup> I knew everyone who lived there.

The Creeks, Cherokees, Delawares, Shawnees, Sac & Fox Indians were all very friendly, mutual and agreeable among themselves; but the Osage and Comanches, we just simply could not get along with them. We never had any particular trouble with them other than that they would gang up and steal our ponies and try to take our best hunting ground from us and when we became aware of the fact, we would chase them and run them back to their own reservations. Incidentally, the Osage Indians owned some of the best horses that there was among any of the Indians in the Territory. They would go to Kansas

and steal horses and if the opportunity presented itself, they would steal a stallion that was highly bred and would let them range with their horses, the result of which would be some very fine colts.

The Creek Indians received for a while after the war, money which they called "Head-Right money." Some of them called it "Bread payments" and these payments ranged from four to twenty dollars a month. On account of the Arapahoe Country being settled with white settlers, I drew four dollars and eighty cents.

Other payments which I received on account of settlers taking different parts of the Creek-Nation, principally the Oklahoma Country, was in 1890 when I received twenty-nine dollars and in 1893 I received two payments, one for fourteen dollars and another in the amount of forty-three dollars. Other than the allotments made to myself and family, I do not recall having received anything else during my lifetime from the Government.

#### BRIDGES

On the Texas road at North Elk Creek which was near the battle grounds of Honey Springs during the Civil War was located a toll bridge run by a man by the name of John Mc-

Intosh. On South Elk Creek the toll bridge was run by Mrs. Lila Drew. I worked for Mrs. Drew at this toll bridge in 1881.

#### BUFFALO TRAILS

The only buffalo herds of which I knew ranged west and south of the present town of Pryor, Oklahoma. The trail lead south from Pryor through Wagoner, Muskogee, Checotah, and thence southwest toward the Texas line. It may seem strange to you but when I was only a boy and was helping around on the ranches, I knew the chuck wagons cook oftentimes did not have wood with which to start a fire and cook their meals and they would gather buffalo chips for this purpose.

#### RANCHES

The Mose Perryman ranch was about seven or eight miles east of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma in what is now known as the Choski bottom and operated before the Civil War. Mose Perryman came to this country from Alabama and brought with him a number of slaves which were distant relatives of mine. He handled before the War some eight or nine hundred cattle. He branded with a J. P.

The Rider Fields ranch was located in the Conchartry Mountains several miles north and west of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma and handled about one thousand head of cattle yearly before the Civil War. He like Mose Perryman had slaves and came to this country from Alabama. His brand was I. X.

Mr. Fields was the grandfather of Bluford Miller and in late years lots of the people refer to the Bluford Miller ranch, little knowing that it was the original Rider Fields ranch. Mr. Miller continued to use the same brand as did his grandfather. I worked for Mr. Bluford Miller as early as 1880.

The Lewis Bruner ranch was located near the present town of Stone Bluff, Oklahoma. This was after the Civil War and they handled a thousand head of cattle yearly and used the brand "B".

Una McIntosh had a small ranch near the present town of Eufaula, Oklahoma, and handled about six hundred head yearly. I do not remember their brand.

Rolla McIntosh likewise had a small ranch near the present town of Eufaula, and handled four or five hundred head of cattle yearly, I do not remember the brand.

Before the Civil War Tom McFarland, part Creek, and from Alabama and known to the populace as "Cow Tom" had a ranch on the Canadian river and handled four or five hundred head of cattle yearly and after the war he located a ranch back further north and west on Cane Creek and handled about a thousand head yearly. I do not remember old Cow Tom's brand.

Before the Civil War the Dave Anderson ranch was located within the vicinity of the present town of Stone Bluff, Okla-

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homa, and handled only three or four hundred head yearly.

his brand was "A".

The F. S. Ranch was located about ten miles southwest of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma, and handled from fifteen to twenty-five thousand head of cattle yearly together with five or six hundred head of horses. This ranch was owned by F. S. Severs. I worked on this ranch in 1873-79 and 80.

The foreman of the Severs ranch was named Ed Hart. Ed Hart was about the last foreman on the Severs ranch and married one of Bluford Miller's daughters and after marrying, he acquired a part of Bluford Miller ranch and was known as the Hart ranch. Some of the foreman of the ranch prior to Ed Hart were Shelton Smith, Red Neck Brown and others. Only a boy while working on the ranch for Mr. Severs, I was sent occasionally for the mail and it was necessary for me to go to Okmulgee for same. I remember Captain Belcher as being the postmaster.

The Spaulding Ranch was located west of the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma, and handled seven or eight thousand head of cattle yearly. I do not remember the foremen of this ranch, but as I recall it now they branded with a H.P.

The Lazy S ranch was on Cloud Creek and was owned by H. P. Spaulding and they handled from fifteen to twenty thousand head of cattle yearly and branded their cattle with a

lazy S. There were a number of foremen at times like most ranches, I recall Jim Garret, Jim Spincer, and Al Todd.

The Spike S. ranch was located on Cedar Creek and handled about five thousand head yearly. This ranch started in about 1873 and I think closed down in 1907. The owner of this ranch was a white man named Fort Sango. I remember Sango very well because his brother killed him over affairs concerning his wife.

The Choler Fife ranch was located a few miles west of the present town of Haskell and handled seven or eight hundred head yearly. Fife was a fullblood Creek, his brand was C.F.

Captain Belcher, white man and one time postmaster at Okmulgee, owned a small ranch near Okmulgee and handled four or five hundred head yearly. His brand was "B".

Dave Car ranch was located on Deep Fork Creek west of Okmulgee and handled a thousand head of horses yearly. Dave was a fullblood Creek and his brand was D. C.

Hugh McHenry had a small ranch near the present town of Henryetta, Oklahoma and handled seven or eight head of cattle yearly. Mr. McHenry branded with the letter "H".

A Mr. McDermott who helped to build the old council house at Okmulgee and likewise the Severs store at Okmulgee, married a Creek Indian by the name of Norberg and, after his marriage

to her, moved six miles east of Okmulgee and started a small ranch and handled between eight hundred and a thousand head of cattle yearly. His brand was M. C.

Judge Moore, also known as N. B. Moore, who was at one time Treasurer of the Creek Nation and also one time Supreme Judge, owned a ranch about three miles southeast of Haskell and handled about a thousand head yearly. His right hand man on this ranch was Dan Smith. Their brand was a mule shoe.

The Billie Brown ranch was about a mile northeast of the present town of Haskell and was owned by Billie Brown, a Creek Indian, and handled about seven hundred head yearly. His brand was "B.B."

Bill Harvester, a Creek Indian, had a small ranch some four or five miles northeast of the present town of Haskell and handled about seven hundred head yearly. His brand was "H". He later became a partner with Mr. Turner on a ranch on Pecan Creek, west of Muskogee, Oklahoma.

George Martin owned a small ranch northeast of Porter, Oklahoma on the Verdigris river. This was only a small ranch and I do not know the brand.

The Jeff Davis ranch was located near the present town of Bixby, Oklahoma. This was owned by Mr. Davis, and was a small ranch, I do not remember the brand.

George Perryman, a Creek, owned a small ranch on Red Fork near the present town of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Foreman of this ranch was Goog Childers. This was only a small ranch and I do not remember the brand.

The Clarence Turner ranch was located near the present town of Beland, Oklahoma, on Pecan Creek. He handled between five and ten thousand head of cattle yearly. His foreman was Tom Carey. His brand was Three Bears..

William LeBlanche and Bill Gentry owned a ranch west of the present town of Checotah and near Council Hill and handled about a thousand head yearly. Their brand was a "G".

John Moore owned a ranch near the present town of Council Hill and east of Okmulgee and handled two or three thousand head yearly. The Foreman was Frank Selfridge. Their brand was a half moon and a mule shoe "X".

The Nip Blackstone ranch was south and east of the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma, on Georgie Fork Creek and handled several thousand head yearly. Their brand was N. B.

The Ed Halsell ranch was located on Bird Creek north of the present town of Tulsa and handled about ten thousand head yearly. I do not remember the foreman or the brand.

The Blue Star ranch was located near the present town of Inola, Oklahoma. They handled about eight thousand head yearly but I do not remember the owner or the brand.



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Bill and Jim Edgwood owned a ranch about midway between the present towns of Coweta and Wagoner, Oklahoma. They handled four or five thousand head yearly. I do not remember the name of the owner or the brand.

#### COW TOWNS

Before the railroads were built, Cow towns were established at the present towns of Coweta, Broken Arrow and Council hill, all in Oklahoma.

#### EPIDEMICS

In 1881, there was a smallpox epidemic at Okmulgee, Indian Territory, and it came near wiping out the entire population of this village. They attributed the epidemic to the Bill Fryer family who had moved into the settlement.

In the early days, head lice and greybacks were very annoying and hard to get rid of among all the people and particularly so among the army and troops that were stationed at the Forts. I do not know whether you would call this an epidemic but you may take it for what it's worth.

#### BURIAL GROUNDS

The Elam cemetery located on Pecan Creek near the little village of Elam, Oklahoma. There are several old graves. I remember the McIntosh family as being buried there.

The Perryman cemetery or known as the Vann cemetery over

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in the Blue Creek bottom is very old and a number of old timers are buried there. I remember some of my distant relatives, the Perrymans and the Burgesses, as being buried in this graveyard.

The Isparhechar graveyard is located three miles west and a quarter of a mile south of the present town of Beggs, Oklahoma. Chief Isparhechar and his wife are both buried there.

#### FERRIES

The Mingo Ferry cross the Arkansas river north of the present town of Stone Bluff, Oklahoma, was run by a Creek Indian by the name of Mingo.

The Leacher ferry crossed the Arkansas river west of the present town of Muskogee and about one mile below Fern Mountain.

The Nevins Ferry was controlled, owned, and operated by a Mose and Julia Nevins. This ferry crossed the Arkansas river at about the present location of the Muskogee pump station. This ferry was used considerably because it was on the main artery of travel to the Nation's capitol at Tahlequah. I mean the Cherokee National Capitol.

The Childer's ferry was across the Verdigris river about four miles west of Wagoner, Oklahoma at the present highway bridge on highway Wagoner to Porter, Oklahoma.

The Scott Gentry Ferry crossed the Arkansas river about

one mile east of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma.

Incidentally Scott and his wife is buried about one mile east of where he operated his ferry.

The Googy Soogy ferry crossed the Arkansas river at about the present highway bridge one mile south of the present town of Coweta, Oklahoma.

The Robert Fry ferry crossed the Arkansas river north of Wealaka or north a short way from the present town of Leonard, Oklahoma.

What was known as the Bixby Ferry crossed the Arkansas river north of the present town of Bixby, Oklahoma and was controlled, owned and operated by a man named Berry.

The Texas ferry, and I do not know why they called it this, was controlled, owned and operated by Simon Brown. This ferry crossed the Arkansas river northwest of Muskogee at about what is now known as the Spaulding bridge.

The Tobe Drew ferry was up stream from the Simon Brown ferry about two miles and was owned by Tobe Drew, a Creek Indian. This ferry crossed the Arkansas river.

#### FINANCING

There being no banks in the early days, financing was done principally by the merchants and in some instances by ranchmen when cattle were involved. If a man cared to borrow money he

would go to his merchant and offer what he had as security and if his security was accepted he would not be given the cash money but was given what was known as script, ranging in amounts from 5 cents to \$10.00. This script was used as a medium of exchange by all the merchants within the immediate vicinity. At a certain time the party who issued the script would recall it and pay the cash for it. There was a great deal of bartering in this script for oftentimes parties who had the script would need the real money when he was going to Okmulgee or some other point where the script would not be recognized and naturally he had to suffer a loss to get the real money by discounting it.

I remember well Spaulding script as many a time I have cashed this script at a discount, making in some instances as much as a hundred per cent on the transaction. I remember that if I did not have cash to pay my help at the ranch I would give to the employee a strip of paper about the size of a bank check and show thereon the amount I desired to pay him. This employee would take it to town and as he purchased his food, clothing or what not the merchant would write on the back thereof his name and the amount purchased and on his books he would charge this to me. When the amount on the front of the paper was taken up, the last merchant would retain it and

would deliver it to me showing that it was fully paid. By this method it required considerable bookkeeping, but that was the only alternate. Other ranch men like F. S. Severs did as I.

#### GHOST TOWNS

The old creek agency located on the south side of Fern Mountain northwest of Muskogee is one of the many thriving communities that have passed out of the picture. This village also had a postoffice.

North Fork town on the Texas road near the bank of the north Canadian river is no more. There used to be a postoffice here.

Fisher town on the Texas road south of the present town of Checotah, Oklahoma, on the south Canadian river is another that is no more.

*Sawahla*  
~~Saw, Oklahoma~~, was located about one mile south and mile west of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma and handled all kinds of merchandise with a postoffice in connection. The postmaster was E. B. Harris and the man who ran the store was named Bradford. Later years Mr. Harris acquired both the store and the postmastership. With the building of Midland Valley Railroad, *Sawahla* ~~Saw, Oklahoma~~, became a ghost town because the town of Haskell sprang up on the railroad at the present town of

Haskell, Oklahoma.

The Choski post was owned by C. W. Turner and there was also a post office at this location. Choski post was located about two miles east from the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma and east of the Arkansas River. The building of Haskell, also made this a ghost town.

The town of Lee was located about three miles north of the present town of Boynton, Oklahoma. It was at this place where the Creek Court was held in a little one-room log Court House with a black gum tree standing near by that was used for a whipping post. The Judge of the Court was Judge Reed, a negro, and he also operated a hotel. With the building of the Frisco Railroad, the present town of Boynton, Oklahoma, sprang up and Lee became a ghost town.

#### INDIAN POLICE

We had a number of Indian Police and the Light Horse organization was of the most important and I will tell you more of them later on. I recall John West, John Sixkiller, Wiley McIntosh, and George McIntosh as being some of the leading Indian police.

#### GREEN PEACH WAR

I remember the Green Peach War as if it were yesterday. Some say that the reason they called it the Green Peach War

was because some of the people could not say Isparhechar but would say Green Peachie, and others say that it was at the time of the year that there was Green peaches on the trees.

Isparhechar's party was what we would call today the Republican party and the Checotah Party was what we would the Democrat party. An election was held in 1882 and the the result of that election was that the Checotah party had beaten the Isparhechar party and the Isparhechar party claimed that it was a crooked election and would not consent to Sam Checotah taking office. I had been over to what is now Beggs, Oklahoma, to get a little money that was due me on the Severs pay off. I only had four dollars and eighty cents coming to me and on my way back I took sick and stopped in at Mr. Severs' home and Mrs. Severs had my dinner fixed for me. While I was eating dinner a line of men at least a mile long was marching by headed by Isparhechar going to Pecan Creek to enlist all of the colored people that he could to join him. Mrs. Severs said to me, "Jake we are going to have a war just as sure as the world." After I ate my dinner I mounted my horse and went to my Uncle John Harrison's who lived over at Choski post which was about two or three miles east of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma. When I came to what was later known as the Gentry Ferry, a number of People was there building rafts of logs to get their household goods and women

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folks across the river. I swam my horse across the river and on to my uncle's. I stayed there until the next day and it was necessary for me to go to Muskogee on a business errand and I traveled back across the river and thence southeast coming to the road on which the stage traveled at Pecan Creek and there was five or six hundred of Isparhechar men camped there. I was rather in favor of Isparhechar for I felt that they had been robbed of the election. There were talking as to whether or not that they should surrender and let Checotah take office or die, and they decided that they would rather die. I came on to Sugar Creek that was down near the present town of Taft and I ran on to the Checotah Army but I did not tarry there nor did they bother me and I finished my trip to Muskogee. The Isparhechar and Checotah Armies had a battle on Sugar Creek and after this battle they came out on the prairie east of what we called Billie Grimmet place and had another skirmish. Scouts were sent back to Cloud river on Jake Brown's place and made arrangements or at least came to the conclusion that the Isparhechar army would move into the territory of the Checotah stronghold at the Creek Agency and proceeded to surround Agency Hill and were not more than two or three miles apart from each other after they arrived there. They picked me up then (that is the



Isparhechar army) and sent me as a Scout to where the Veterans Hospital is now and I got a letter and carried it back to Isparhechar and the letter instructed them that they should disband and scatter or the troops of the United States Government would be called in to handle them. Lee Perryman with the Isparhechar army finally took an oath in behalf of Isparhechar to not rebel. Henry Reed who was the Judge at Lee took a number of the men and sentenced them to the whipping post, giving them fifty lashes apiece, and with this the thing died down considerable but in the late winter of 1882 Isparhechar went to Okmulgee and met Sleeping Rabbit and they again reorganized the Isparhechar army and they met the Checotah army of about seven or eight hundred men southwest of Okmulgee and killed seventeen of Checotah's men but Checotah captured Sleeping Rabbit and killed him. In December of 1882, the Isparhechar army retreated to the Sac & Fox country with about twelve hundred men under what they called General Will Robinson. They were followed by the Checotah army but the Sac & Fox would not permit them to fight in their territory and at this point the Isparhechar army retreated to the Cheyenne country and stayed there until April. The U. S. Government stepped in and took charge, captured Isparhechar and his men and moved them in to Fort Gibson in April 1883 and kept them

as prisoners of war. Isparhechar finally gave up and signed a treaty with the government that he would cease such activities. Sam Checotah was finally seated as Chief of the Creek Tribe and remained chief until the next election which was in 1884. After the Government had this trouble on the back of my old home place on Conchartry Mountain they erected a watch tower and likewise one on the Bluford Miller ranch. The oddity of these watch towers was that we could never find anyone who had seen the army when they were built.

#### THE LIGHT HORSE ORGANIZATION

The Creek Nation was divided into three districts, Muskogee, Indian Territory known as Arkansas town was district number one, the present town of Coweta was district number two, and Okmulgee, Indian Territory was district number three. The Light horsemen consisted of five police, sometimes they would travel together and at other times separately, and one of each five was the Captain of that particular squad. If an emergency arose in any one district to where they would need help they would summon help from the other districts.

Their prisoners would be chained as they had no jails in which to hold them. They would be taken at a designated time before Judge Henry Reed at Lee where the Court house was and tried. For the first offense they would receive twenty-five

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lashes at the whipping post administered by the Light Horsemen, second offense was fifty lashes and the third offense they were shot.

I remember two Judges who served on the bench at Lee. They were Judge Henry Reed and Judge Sam LeBlanche. Some of the prosecuting attorneys were Jeffery Smith, Saul Anderson and Wallace Menal.

I have seen them whip Babe McHardy, Cubby McIntosh, Sunny Grayson, Tom Canard, Button Grew and others. I have seen people shot at this post and remember particularly one by the name of Jerry Stidem. The last man whipped at this post before it was abolished was Newman Kelley who was charged with the stealing of a horse.

#### INDIAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

About the only time that musical instruments were used by the Indians were at a stomp dance. They would take bark and make them a basket affair over which they would stretch a tanned cowhide and on this they would beat as you would a drum. They called this their tom tom. Around their ankles they would tie shells and in them they would place tiny rocks so that they would rattle when they danced. They would sing, dance, and beat on the tom tom and for the oddity the cowboys would join the Indians in their dances and enjoyed it. Most of the cowboys could sing in Creek as well as the Indian himself.

POLITICS

Political affairs were always at fever heat. The voting places in the Creek Nation was at Tallahassee, Coweta, Okmulgee and Eufaula.

The usual method of voting for a long time would be that all who were around the voting place would line up for the party whom they wish to vote. The clerk would count the number in each line and make a record of same. Later on they would go into the Clerk give him their name and tell him for whom they wished to vote and he would make a record of that. Should a young man become of lawful age, which was twenty-One, years, there would have to be a number of citizens of the tribe who would vouch for his being of age before he was allowed to vote. The first vote cast would be for the Chief of the tribe, second vote Vice Chief, third vote, treasurer, fourth for the Clerk, fifth vote for Supreme Judge, sixth vote for the town king, seventh vote for the Legislature, and the eighth vote was for the House of Warriors.

FORTS

Fort Gibson was located at the present town of Fort Gibson, Fort Washita was located in the extreme southern part of the territory on the Washita river, Fort Sill was

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located near the present town of Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Fort Coffee was located near the Arkansas river about twenty-five miles up stream from Fort Smith, Arkansas, Fort Davis was located on the north bank of the Arkansas river a little north and east of the present city of Muskogee, Fort Wayne was located in the Spavinaw hills near the Grand river about twelve miles east of the present town of Vinita, Oklahoma. I can't recall others at this time but there were others.

#### INDIAN MOUNDS

There were and is one or two or three mounds in the vicinity of old Fort Davis north of the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma. There are a number of mounds around the present town of Bald Hill, Oklahoma. Quite a number of mounds around in the Concharty Mountains west and north of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma. South of Muskogee, Oklahoma is quite a large mound known as Chimney Mountain. This might be better described as being near the present town of Summitt, Oklahoma. Around High Springs which is the present town of Council Hill, Oklahoma also there are a number of mounds.

#### ROAD AND TRAILS

I at one time knew every cow trail in the Creek Nation but it would be impossible for me at this time to tell you how they ran, due to fences, towns railroads and highways

which have blotted them out.

The Texas road was one of the main arteries through the territory and I have traveled portions of it a number of times and worked at the toll bridge as I have told you on Elk Creek run by Mrs. Lila Drew. I have traveled this road from Nevins Ferry which was located at the present Muskogee Pump Station in a southwestern direction for about two miles being about a quarter of a mile east of the present school for the Blind at Muskogee and thence south over the ridge across north and south Elk Creek continuing on across the North Canadian River through old north Fork Town and on to the South Canadian at about the present town of Texana, Oklahoma. This is as far as I ever traveled the Texas road.

I use to travel some on the old Chisholm trail. I would leave the Bluford Miller ranch and hit this trail at about what is now Cleveland, Oklahoma and thence south along what is now about the present Rock Island Railroad to Fort Washita.

The Arguckle road ran west from the Nevins Ferry described above about a half a mile north of the present Lewis Jobe home and continued west past the old Creek Agency on the south side of Fern Mountain and thence in a southwestern direction to Okmulgee. I do not know which way it ran from Okmulgee.

The old Stage line used to run west out of Muskogee, Indian Territory, to Pecan creek and thence south for about two miles and then southwesterly to the stage stand on Cane Creek. Doctor Barnett had charge of the stage line horses and fed stage drivers.

I will describe these stage line routes under the heading of stage lines if you want that.

#### STAGE LINES

Leaving Muskogee for Fort Smith, Arkansas, you would go directly east from the town of Muskogee, past what is now the School for the Blind and intersect the Texas road and thence in a northwesterly direction crossing the Nevins ferry near the present Muskogee Pump Station and then northwesterly up the east bank of the Grand river, thence east through Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, and thence southeasterly over the Fort Gibson Mountain now known as Braggs Mountain and continuing over the Green Leaf Mountains until you reach the Illinois river at which place you crossed on the Bullet Foreman Ferry and continuing along about the same direction as the flow of the Arkansas river and crossing the Arkansas river at Fort Smith, Arkansas by ferry.

Under the heading of roads and trails, I told you of the stage line that ran as far as Dr. Barnett place on Cane

Creek so I will take up this line at this point. Leaving the Barnett place you would travel due west by John Reddy's place who was a blacksmith and operated a blacksmith shop for the Creeks. He was paid by the Government for his services and was a Creek himself. Leaving the blacksmith shop you would go west to six mile creek and continue west into the town of Okmulgee, Indian Territory. At Okmulgee, the horses were fed and the passengers and stage drivers were cared for both east and west to this point. At Okmulgee, another stage line would take the mail and passengers and continue in a southwestern direction into the Sac & Fox country.

From the village of Lee or Dr. Barnett stage stand above mentioned, the stage would make connections there for points of Sam Brown's store and Dealaka. This stage line ran northwest from Lee through the Concharty Mountains to Sam Brown's store where they would change horses and eat and continue on to Dealaka and cross the Arkansas river into the Perryman settlement west of Coweta.

#### SALT

There was a salt works located about six miles east of Pryor, Indian Territory, near the Mayes Ferry. Wells were drilled at this point I suppose by the Government which flowed



salt water. The water was placed in large iron kettles and boiled until it left the pure salt. In the early days salt was hauled from there by all the rest of the people, as well as the Indian, in the event there was no salt water creeks in the vicinity in which they lived. The people did not only use the salt for themselves but would haul it and pile it at different points over the prairie for cattle licks.

There was also a salt works down by Bullet Foreman's ferry which was five or six miles up stream from the mouth of the Illinois river. I have seen these salt works in passing over the ferry en route to Fort Smith, Arkansas, however, the people in my part of the country always went to the Mayes ferry for salt.

After the Railroads came through the country carloads of salt was shipped in barrels to Summitt, Muskogee, Eufaula, Checotah, Wagoner, Pryor, and Vinita, Indian Territory and the salt boys on the ranches would cart these barrels of salt to the ranch and saw them half into and then place them at strategic points on the ranch and these served as cattle licks in later days.

#### INTRODUCTION OF MILLS AND GINS INTO THE INDIAN TERRITORY

From the old mortar and pestle used for grinding corn came the hand grinders, the water mills, tread mills and of course

today the steam roller mills for both corn and wheat.

The modern molasses mill in Oklahoma has changed but little for today the cane is cut and crushed with rollers by horse power and the juice placed in a large tank boiled and skimmed and thence molasses.

They also claimed that the Government had not complied with a treaty that the Creeks had made. This all started down on Deep Fork Creek at Hickory Grove a little west of the present town of Henryetta, Oklahoma. It was more a graft on the part of Crazy Snake to make some money than it was anything else for he would solicit funds from his sympathizers, claiming that it took lots of money to employ lawyers to fight the case. Sampson Brown and others went to arrest them for misleading the people and a fight ensued between them and the officers at Eufaula, Oklahoma. Brown and his son fought with the officers and the son was shot and finally died and the officers killed a number of them. Crazy Snake was finally arrested but they let him go free and back home and that settled this uprising.

#### MARRIAGES

Legal marriage was about the same as it was today. License was secured from the Federal Judge at Fort Smith, Arkansas and was completed by a minister back in the Nation.

Many people never secured a license but took unto themselves a man or a woman that they chose for their husband or wife and lived with them and acknowledged them to everybody as husband and wife and this was considered as legal and lawful in the courts as otherwise. This was known as a common law marriage.

To get a divorce it was necessary to go before the Creek court and show cause and if the Court deemed it advisable and just, he would grant the divorce. Divorce proceedings were usually brought before Judge Alex Sanger at the Creek Nation's capitol at Okmulgee, Indian Territory.

#### PERMITS GRANTED NON-CITIZENS

In order to employ people who were not citizens of the tribe, the employer was compelled to pay two dollars a month for each employee for a long time and finally it was reduced to one dollar a month and at last nothing. Bill Robinson who now lives over at Muskogee, Oklahoma use to be the Creek Collector of these permits. I have paid many a dollar for people who were employed by me. My mother had told me that a molasses mill was operated in about the like manner on the Mose Perryman plantation in the present Choski bottom several miles east of the present town of Haskell, Oklahoma, before the Civil War.

From sitting around the fire at night picking out cotton seed by hand came the old horse power and water power gin and then the gins that we have today.

#### MISSIONS

The Tallahassee Mission was located at the present town of Tallahassee, Oklahoma, and was made from brick which were made by hand. The father of Alice Robertson was first in charge of this mission and when he died his daughter, Alice, was in charge and Miss Alice later was elected Congresswoman from Oklahoma.

The Asbury Mission was at Eufaula, Indian Territory, and the Superintendent was Joe Perryman. It was of plank construction. The Wealaka Mission was located near the present town of Leonard, Oklahoma and was of Brick construction. I remember Legas Perryman, D. Hodge and Pleas Porter were in charge of Wealaka.

The Pecan Creek Mission was located on pecan creek about seven miles west of the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma and was under the supervision of Buzz Hawkins.

The Creek School at the present town of Sapulpa, Oklahoma was in charge of Jim and Will Sapulpa.

The Creek Orphanage was located about a mile north east of Okmulgee, Indian Territory. This was originally constructed

of plank but was destroyed partially by fire and rebuilt of brick which were made by hand.

#### THE CRAZY SNAKE REBELLION

This little flare up was in recent years and was known as the Crazy Snake rebellion of 1908. Chitto Harjo was known as Crazy Snake and he did not want the Creek Nation to become a State and he like Isparhechar went about the country enlisting men to support his cause.

#### UNITED STATES MARSHALS

Some of the old time U. S. Marshals were Bud Ledbetter, Bazz Reed, Heck Thomas, Grant Thomas, John West, John Six-killer, Henry Six-killer, George Drew, Ike Rogers, and John Nevins. In 1898, Ike Rogers was killed on the depot platform at Fort Gibson by an outlaw. George Drew was killed by a Cherokee Indian at Muskogee, Indian Territory.

#### OUTLAWS

I knew every outlaw in Oklahoma from the James boys down to Pretty Boy Floyd. The James boys, it was rumored around the ranches, had buried money over on Ash Creek and all the cow punchers would go over there and dig but they failed to ever find the money. Cherokee Bill was well known to me and crossed and re-crossed the ranches on which I was working numbers of times. The Dalton Boys were working with me at

the time that I was working on the F. S. Ranch for Sam Bevers.

I have worked day after day in the saddle, riding herd with the Dalton Boys. I remember well when the Dalton boys were first arrested on a charge concerning liquor and, in my opinion, they were not guilty and being brave and daring they turned to be the worst criminals, equal to the James boys. Rufus Dalton--I admired him and he was really a pal of mine but of course I had to change my mind after he had committed the crimes he did.

There was another gang known as the Buck gang that started out in crime but they only lasted about eleven days until they were captured.

I want to tell the story about the first time I was ever held up. I was working at the Bluford Miller ranch and he sent me to Sam Brown's store to do some trading. Sam Brown was treasurer of the Creek Nation before Judge Moore. Mr. Miller told me to get some sand with which to make plaster and to bring back a barrel of salt and some other groceries. When I arrived at the store I noticed three well groomed horses tied to the hitch rack and in the rifle scabbards on the horses were Winchester rifles. I paid no attention particularly to that as that was just an ordinary custom in those days, but the horses were not known to me and I admired

them. I tied my team and went on back of the store where an Indian carpenter was working and talked to him a while then I loaded up some sand went in the store rolled out my barrel of salt, barrel of syrup, etc., and was all ready to go. I did not leave immediately but went on back again and begin talking to my Indian friend and we both walked into the store and as we did, we met a man with a forty-five pistol who said "you fellows get in line." There were ten or twelve in the store all lined up and with their hands up. These outlaws went through all of our pockets and what they found there was practically nothing and then they ordered a Mr. Carter to open the safe which he did and they got from the safe about \$900.00, carried off a lot of cowboy boots and took what jewelry they wanted. After they got what all they wanted, they marched us about a mile south of the store to the foot of the Concharty Mountains and left us and they went their way. Well, I was only a young man and I did not know what to do, but I mustered up courage enough to go back and get my team and what I had loaded and started for the ranch, this being nearly sundown and, believe me, I was sure a scared human, driving that trail home by myself. Just as I arrived at the ranch, I could hear a posse of men riding

fast in the distance. I did not know whether it was the outlaws or the Light Horses but they finally came up and it was officers pursuing the outlaws. They asked if I had seen anything more of them on the trail and I told them, "No.", and I asked them if they knew who they were and they told me that it was a part of Cherokee Bill's gang.

#### ODDITIES OF THE EARLY DAYS

The first cook stove I ever owned was in 1884 for which I paid sixteen dollars. My friends and neighbors came for miles to see my new stove. It was a little cast iron stove about sixteen inches wide and twenty-four inches long,

We Indians used to dam the creeks and take either buck eyes, green walnut or devil shoestring and crush them and throw them into the water and poison the fish. We did not fool with a hook and line or a net and we would catch enough fish at one time to last us at camp for a week and give plenty away to all our friends and neighbors.

We use to make soap by saving our ashes and in the spring we would pour water over the ashes and throw in the water old meat scraps and boil down to where we could make either soft soap or hard soap.

#### CREEK CHIEFS

The first Creek Chief after the war was a man by the name of Sand and others which I knew were Lojo Harjo,



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Isparhechar, Sam Checotah, Joe Perryman, Legas Perryman, Pleasant Porter and Moty Tiger.

#### RAILROADS

The M. K. & T. Railroad built through the Indian Territory during the years of 1871-72 and 73. The Santa Fe Railroad built through the Oklahoma Territory in 1886. The Kansas City Southern Railroad was built through the extreme Eastern part of Oklahoma in 1894. This used to be called the old split log road. The St. L & S. F. Railroad known as the old K & O was built into Vinita, Indian Territory, in 1889. What is now the Tulsa Branch of the M. K. & T. Railroad was built in 1881 and 1882. The M. V. Railroad was built in 1904. the K. O. & G. Railroad built south out of Miami, Indian Territory, in 1907.

#### CREEK COUNCIL HOUSES

Before the Civil War the old Creek Council house was at High Springs which you would locate today as being Council Hill, Oklahoma. This Council House was two double log houses put together with a large gallery between them.

After the Civil War the Creek Council house was built at the Creek Nation's capitol, Okmulgee, Indian Territory. This Council house was constructed of Stone and still stands at the present time in right down town Okmulgee.

COMMENTS

Jake Simmons better known to all his friends as "Uncle Jake" is a very interesting man to talk to. He is not only familiar with the happenings of the times a half a century or more ago but is right up to the minute at the present time. There is nothing more he enjoys than to contact his boyhood friends and talk over the days when they were boys, the good times they enjoyed together as well as those during the trying times. His education is limited but his practical knowledge of affairs, together with his limited education, has made him a great character. He loves his home and has always made a devoted husband and a loving father. As you will note from this interview, he started life in a very humble way and his first job was for only six dollars a month but he forged on, availing himself of every opportunity until he made himself reasonably comfortable in his retiring days as far as worldly goods are concerned. His wife, Mrs. Simmons, reiterates that she would love to enjoy the good things that she enjoyed in her early days for she loved to card, spin, and weave her cloth and made her thread and that she has located a catalog where she can purchase an old spinning wheel and it is her intention to pass her idle hours, living again the hours she has spent at the old spinning wheel.