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Robert H. Boatman,
Investigator,
April 20, 1938.

Interview with Mr. C. C. Swanson,
Cole, Oklahoma.

I am a native of the Indian Territory and am of Cherokee Indian parentage. I was born in the Choctaw Nation in a log cabin located near the bank of Janey Creek, some fifteen miles east of Atoka, on the site of the old Choctaw Indian court ground.

The only laws of the Territory were Indian laws and each tribe had its own way of enforcing them. The court or chief decided what punishment an offender should have. The sentence was most always pretty severe; a whipping post was used for minor offences. The offender was strapped to this post and whipped with a rawhide, the sentence running from fifty to one hundred lashes and often as many as one hundred fifty. If the court felt that an offender deserved any more than one hundred fifty lashes he was sentenced to be shot, because it was considered by the tribe that when a man deserved more than one hundred fifty lashes that he was not a fit subject to live among their people. These were the two main points of Indian law of the Choctaw people.

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I always lived among the Choctaw tribe. I was raised among the Choctaw people because my foreparents had come to the Choctaw Nation many years before my birth, holding some grudge against the Cherokee tribe.

I fell in love and was married to Miss Dovie Bristow, a daughter in the Choctaw tribe, and we set up housekeeping in a log cabin and a tent. I began hacking crossties which I sold to the railroad company and in this way I earned a living.

Our earliest trading point was a small town, Massie, located on the Katy Railroad. This village consisted of two stores and a post office and continued for some time. Later, the town was discontinued after which several miles had to be traveled to get supplies as we had to drive to Calvin, a small town located on the South Canadian River, about thirty-five miles west of where the town of McAlester now is.

People did not have a hard time making a living. Small crops of corn were raised which was used principally for bread and to feed to beef cattle, which was the principal meat used as it required less care than hog meat.

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Of course wild meat could be had almost any time for there was plenty of game such as turkeys, deer, prairie chickens, rabbits, squirrels, geese and quail.

But with the coming of Statehood and establishment of State Government a very rapid change took place, and I am fully satisfied with conditions of today.