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McL<sup>K</sup>INNEY, RUFUS (Mr. and Mrs.) INTERVIEW

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Indian-Pioneer History  
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Interview with Mr. & Mrs. Rufus McKinney  
of Davidson, Oklahoma. One of the oldest  
married couples in Tillman County.

We are approaching our sixtieth year of married  
life. I was born June 7, 1850, in Washington County,  
Arkansas.

Among the farmers there in those days the es-  
sentials to success were health, industry and the ability to read,  
write and to "figger." When the Civil War broke out  
between the states I was just a barefooted boy of eleven  
years, carefree and not often reminded of the necessity  
of going to any of the few schools that were in Wash-  
ington County in those days; however I did attend a  
little one room log cabin school a few months until  
the war broke out.

My wife was born over at Cincinnati, Arkansas,  
a few miles from my childhood home on April 28, 1849.  
However our families knew nothing of each other until  
we moved to Cook County, Texas, in 1856.

On my first trip to Texas with my father and  
mother in 1856 I saw my first train at Sherman and  
the steam engine was such a curiosity we all gathered  
about to see how it worked. There were several other  
boys about my own age who were also just as curious

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to see the engine. One boy in a hurry to escape the danger of the monstrous engine and its dreadful spewing of steam jumped into a wagon.

My grandfather, Thomas McKinney sent the first copy of Cherokee Indian Alphabet to Washington, D. C. It was sent in before the removal of the Cherokee Indians from Tennessee to their reservation in the Indian Territory which later became Oklahoma.

Soon after the war broke out between the states, a band of bushwhackers were organized in northern, Arkansas and southern Missouri. These bands were ~~warbands~~ who struck swiftly to rob, pillage and murder their enemies and then make a hurried retreat to their rendezvous. As I was but a small boy I was never molested, but I often saw these bands come and go and overheard them tell of their raids and murders. The bushwhackers known as the Blackburn Gang had their hide-out in the Ozark mountains not far from our home in Arkansas.

It was this disrespect for law that caused the death of my father, David McKinney in August 1865. Several years before that time my father was on the grand jury and helped indict a John Johnson for play-

ing cards on Sunday. This grudge was carried by the Johnsons until it finally culminated in my father, being shot in the back and murdered by the Johnsons who had become members of the bushwhackers.

I knew Jesse James also. In about 1865 the James boys began their outlawry. They often visited in northern parts of Arkansas and Jessie and Frank were at our farm home several times. I was only a small boy at that time, so they paid little attention to me when I was around, but I heard things that impressed me so that I have a vivid recollection of them today.

In 1865 I set out for myself, making a prospect<sup>ing</sup> trip to Mexico. I later took a job driving cattle from southern Texas over the ~~Chisholm Trail~~ <sup>Chisholm Trail</sup>. And my last job with Texas stockmen was taking 18,000 head of horses from southern Texas to the Black Hills of South Dakota. However, I was unable to make the whole trip, for when we reached Fort Worth I was accidentally thrown from a horse and disabled so that I could not continue.

I then went to visit my sister in Cook County, Texas, and there I met Miss Jane Smith. After a

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brief courtship we were married in Cook County  
November 15, 1877.

In 1910 we sold our farm in Texas and  
moved to Davidson, Oklahoma, near which place  
we purchased a farm, upon which we still live.