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Field Worker

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A CAMP GROUND AND THE CAMP MEETINGS

About four miles east and about two miles north of Stilwell, Oklahoma, near the old home of John Alberty, is a bubbling spring of cold water. It is located in a deep valley nearly surrounded by beautiful hills covered with grass and beautiful trees. To this secluded valley, in the early days of the Cherokee Nation, the old time Cherokee families from far and near would come, in wagons, on horseback and on foot, to be at and take part in the annual "Camp Meeting". Usually the whole family went, taking with them, camping equipment and food. They also hunted during the stay at camp.

The time of the meeting was usually in August and September because the farming was over, the weather was fine and grass was plentiful for the stock which they had with them. These meetings would last for two, three or four weeks. There would be regular worship at 11:00 o'clock A. M. and at 7:00 o'clock P. M. These services would sometimes last as long as two hours. It is said that much lasting good was done at these meetings, as shown by the good Christian lives of the people who became Christians at these meetings.

Aside from the religious worship at these meetings, was the social side of them. In the long forenoons and afternoons and between the hours of worship, the folks enjoyed themselves, visiting and becoming better acquainted with those living in different neighborhoods.

At this camp there was a long shed with a long table. The cooking was done over an open fire and the meals served under the shed on the long table.

There are several people yet living in the neighborhood who have attended these meetings. They are Nancy (Aunt Nan) Bigby, Walk Gott, Joe Gott, Ned Alberty and Sam Houston Adair.

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Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

February 16, 1937

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Interview: Sam H. Adair

HORSE RACING

Seven miles east and one mile north of Stilwell, Oklahoma is a narrow valley which was used, in early days, for a race track. This track is very near the Arkansas State line and the races were attended by the people who lived in Arkansas as well as those living in the Cherokee Nation. This seemed to be one of the great sports with the early pioneers, as told by some of the older set. It is said that the day for the race was published many days in advance and those most interested would anxiously wait for the day to arrive.

Much betting was done before the day of the race and of course, more on the day of the race. The betting was from very small amounts to very large amounts.

Often there would be much whiskey at these races. Because of the nearness to the State line, it could be easily procured. Many fights and some killings have been there. I am told that the outlaw, Tom Starr, was accused of killing one man at one of these races. One negro rider was killed here while riding a race.

