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Field Worker, Alene D. McDowell,
May 19, 1937.

Interview with Henry Armstrong.
131 N. Choctaw,
Bartlesville, Okla.

Born October, 1870,
Near Bartlesville, Indian T.

Parents Arthur Armstrong. I. T.
Nancy Ketchum-Armstrong, Kan.

A DELAWARE INDIAN NATIVE

Henry Armstrong was born in October, 1870, about one mile east of what is now Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

Father - Arthur Armstrong. The Delaware roll shows he was born in 1840. His parents were on a hunting trip from Ohio, and Arthur was born near Skiatook, Indian Territory. He came to the Indian Territory with the Shawnee and Delaware Indians from Wyandotte County, Kansas, in the spring of 1867. He was a fullblood Delaware Indian and served as a Union soldier with the 6th Kansas Cavalry in the Civil War and was a strong Republican. He died November 18, 1919, in Bartlesville and is buried in White Rose Cemetery.

Mother - Nancy Ketchum Armstrong, daughter of a Delaware Chief, was born in Wyandotte County, Kansas. The

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Delaware roll taken February 7, 1867, at Leavenworth, Kansas, showed her age as 22 years old. According to this roll she was born in 1845. She died at the age of 28 years, near Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and is buried in the Beck Cemetery, located one-half mile north of the County Farm, east of Bartlesville.

The Delaware roll shows the date of my birth as October, but my father said I was born in July when the plums were ripe.

When my parents came to Indian Territory, they settled at what is now the east edge of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Our house was located on the banks of the Armstrong Lake, where the Hutchison power house now stands. Our home was a twelve by fourteen foot, log house. The logs were put together with mud and the windows were four panes in a sash about two feet square. We had a large fireplace for heating and cooking.

Our furniture was all homemade. A tree was split, hewn and smoothed for bed posts and rails and we had no springs. We cut hay or straw and filled a large sack or straw tick for a mattress. Our chairs were blocks of wood cut from the tree trunk with four legs bored into them. We

had no tables but spread a blanket on the floor or ground and sat around it on the ground to eat. We had no floors in our home.

After my mother's death, my father married Nancy Jackson, daughter of Colonel Jackson who lived on Cotton Creek, east of Copan. My stepmother died August 7, 1890, and two years later he married Maggie Davis, who is still living in Bartlesville.

SCHOOLS

When my parents settled in the Indian Territory there were no schools in this part of the Territory. In 1875 my father built the first school house, located one-half mile north of the present County Farm, on Coon Creek. This building was of native lumber, and there were about fifteen white, Indian and Negro children enrolled. This was a subscription school and the parents paid one dollar a month for each child. The first teacher was Mrs. Frank Bellows whose husband was postmaster at the Bartles store.

In about 1888 my father built a log building at the north end of what is now Seneca Avenue. This was used for a school and a denominational Sunday school for Whites, Indians and Negroes.

Later, as the country became more settled and the log building was too small to accommodate the increasing population, my father built a box school house across the street west of where the City barn is now located on the north end of Delaware Avenue. This building was used for several years as a school house and church. The new town of Bartlesville on the south side of Caney River soon outgrew the small school house and the neighbors, lead by J. C. Brooks, took donations and bought native lumber from Jim Stokes' mill west of Dewey and built a larger school house. This was located at what is now Garfield School at 6th Street and Cherokee Avenue. The first teacher was Lizzie Bryant from Kansas. Our second teacher was Emma Hobert, also from Kansas. Other early day teachers were: Carrie Armstrong Overlees, Alice Wilson and Albert Rupart. The attendance had increased to twenty-two pupils.

The Cherokee Government hired a teacher for the Indian children and the White children were to pay one dollar a month tuition. The teacher was Ida Collins. In about 1905 the Garfield building was erected.

Billy Johnstone, George B. Keeler, Jake Bartles and my father made the largest donations for the early day education of Bartlesville.

EARLY DAY CHURCHES

The first Sunday school I can remember in our vicinity was in 1886, held in a house, one-fourth mile south of the Nelson Carr home, northwest of what is now Dewey, Oklahoma. There was an attendance of about fifteen and we had one Testament and four hymn books. Each would read a verse from the Testament and pass it on to the next one. Two of our preachers were Billy Adams, of Alluwe and O. P. Coberly. They were both Baptist Ministers.

The best posted minister I ever heard was C. B. Gray, a Baptist Preacher. The Gray family lived north of the Armstrong Lake, east of town where they had cleared the timber from the land for cultivation. Northeast Bartlesville is now located on this land.

One night in the rainy season the lake overflowed. Mr. Gray had sat up most of the night watching the lake, and had dropped off to sleep; when he awakened the water was in the house. The floor boards were not nailed down and were floating. His two sons, John and Jim, son-in-law, Josh Thompson, and nephew, George Martin, were awakened and they all waded out in water waist deep. Mr. Gray had a large

trunk of clothes and he carried it out on his shoulder. George Martin was lost and climbed a tree where he spent the night. The next morning he saw an opossum and a snake in the same tree, just above him. It was noon before the rescue party, Frank Bellows and T. J. Garlic, arrived with a boat from Bartles store.

The first church was built at Silver Lake, south of Bartlesville, by Billy Adams. This church was for white people and Indians. Until this time all the churches and Sunday schools had been wadenominational and the Negroes were allowed to attend. The Silver Lake Church was of Baptist denomination.

I remember a Negro woman, Mary Beck, attended our meetings at Post Oak and Cotton Creek churches, and she could certainly sing and shout. The Beck Cemetery, east of Bartlesville, was named in her memory.

There are five Osage Indian graves on the banks of the Armstrong Lake but they can not be located now. The Osages buried their dead on top of the ground and covered them with rocks.

We had a synagogue on Coon Creek where we held meetings in October of each year. These meetings lasted twelve days.

I remember a Delaware Indian woman, Mrs. Blackwing Anderson, told us at the synagogue meeting one time, many years ago, of a dream she had. She dreamed of a white road, from east to west and from north to south. She warned us to stay off this road for there would be many killed on it. This was the prediction of the paved highways and the accidents that occur on them now.

HORSE RACES

The horse races of the early days were honest, the best horse always won.

Ola Wilhite owned the best race horse in the community and we thought it could not be beaten. One time a man camped near the Bartles Mill for a few days and he heard of Wilhite's horse. We went to the Bartles Store one day and asked Sam Bopst about the horse and Sam told him it could not be beaten and asked if he had anything that could run. He said, "I have a nag I gallop sometimes."

A race was matched for six hundred yards and the race was to be run where Dewey, Oklahoma, is now located, four miles north of Bartlesville. When he arrived with his horse, it was very ordinary looking and was swaybacked. John McCall-

ister, Sam Bopst and several others were placing their bets on the Wilhite horse, when Albert Curleyhead asked Frank Leno, an Indian, which horse would win. Leno pointed out some good points about the swayback and said it would win; however, he never bet on a horse race, not even his own horse. Curleyhead bet on the swayback and the others bet on the Wilhite horse. The owner of the swayback said he did not have any money but put up a shot gun and \$5.00. The day of the race he had a big roll of bills and bet heavily. His jockey was a little negro boy and Albert Lane rode the Wilhite horse. When the old man brought his horse out it could hardly walk but when it was led out onto the track and the little negro was seated in the saddle, the horse "flew." The swayback won and the local boys were a sorry bunch.

When I was about fourteen years old, I was herding cattle for George Brazee for ten cents a day. He had a horse-power threshing machine and did threshing here in Kansas. I had a little bald faced pony that could step pretty lively, and I had been running a few races for tobacco and handkerchiefs. My father was a peculiar man and he did not approve of races, so I ran my pony secretly.

Mr. Brazee was threshing for Joe Nels, south of Havana, Kansas, and matched a race for my pony with a fellow named Stafford. This race was run at a little place, Jayhawk, Kansas, which is not in existence now. The sunflowers were nine feet high and the August sun was fierce, but there were about two hundred there. My pony won the race and Jim Sippy, a heavy loser, wanted it run over, but it was not.

I was working near Post Oak, north of Dewey and matched a race for my pony. I bet my Winchester against a cow and won but I did not take the cow, because of my secret from my father. J. C. Ross, a preacher and a friend of our family, told my father about this race and one morning while I was grooming the pony my father came to the barn, He commented on the pony and asked what I would take for him. I told him Jack Johnson had offered me \$100.00 for the pony and he advised me to take it. I did this but it was a big sacrifice for me to sell. I took the money home and gave it to my father and he bought cattle for me and this gave me my first start.

My father then explained to me the reason he objected to horse races. Chief Journeycake owned a good horse at Leavenworth, Kansas, in the early days at the fort. He would not bet on a race, but would run his horse for the sport of the race. He matched a race with the soldiers at the Fort and his horse won. After this the soldiers would borrow the horse and match races for it.

A man named Walker camped near the fort one night. He had a team of poor horses, chain harness, an old dilapidated wagon with a cultivator tied behind, and an extra horse which followed behind. That evening he went to the fort and engaged in a game of cards and chuck-a-luck. He told them he had a race horse and would like to match a race if they had anything that could run. They borrowed the Journeycake horse and made up a purse of about \$700.00 for their horse. He told them he did not have any money but when the betting started he had a big roll of bills.

Two days before the race, two strangers arrived at the fort and looked both horses over but said nothing.

The Journeycake horse won the race by a fraction and the soldiers wanted to match another race. He told them he would talk it over with them the next morning. When they

went to the camp the next day, all they found was a pile of ashes and the old cultivator. It was the general opinion that the strangers owned the horse and furnished the money for the old man to bet.

WHEAT GROWING

Jake Bartles raised the first wheat in this vicinity and in the early nineties he raised a bumper crop. Colonel Norwood lived on the Bartles place and raised wheat on an extensive plan.

N. F. Carr was really the founder of the mill site in Old Bartlesville. He tried to establish a mill in the bend of Cane River and cut a tunnel across the neck of the bend, but soon gave it up. Jake Bartles saw the advantages of this location and in 1877 built a dam across the river and established the mill. He bought a quarry on Liza Creek, north of the mound in what is now west Bartlesville. I helped haul rock from this quarry for the dam about the same time I herded cattle for Mr. Brazee. I learned to chew tobacco, swear and shoot while working for these two men. I could shoot a horse fly from the back of a steer with a fife and never touch the steer.

The wheat buyers were Johnstone and Keeler, Bartles and Bradley and Bryant.

Jesse Overlees and Albert Rupart established a lumber yard at the corner of Third street and Cherokee Avenue, which is the present location of the Overlees-Kruse Lumber yard.

ALLOTMENT

My father was a member of the Cherokee Council and when the Indians wanted the land allotted he opposed it. I remember we were at the Fourth of July picnic on the Joe Parker place on Brush creek, north of Dewey and the question of the allotment was discussed. My father was asked his views and he discarded his coat and tie, climbed upon a wagon and made a wonderful speech. He told them the restriction would be lifted in a few years, and the Indians would soon sell their land and in a few years they would be penniless. He spoke of the future for the younger generation and his predictions have come true. In conclusion of his speech, he told them if they still wanted the land allotted, he would help them. The land was sectionized and each given his allotment. Out of the eight hundred Delawares who received allotments, there are only about two hundred who have their homes now. The registered Delaware Indians had

the same rights as the native born Cherokees and received one hundred acres as their allotment. My allotment was eighty acres north of the Caney River where the Cudahy Refinery plant now stands. If the land was exceptionally good, the allotment was not so large as the valuation was higher. Our agency was located at Muskogee, Oklahoma, where it is still in existence.

My father came to the Indian Territory with the first Delaware Indians from Wyandotte County, Kansas. The Delawares are divided into three clans, the Turtle, Wolf and Turkey Clans and we belong to the Turtle Clan.

The Wyandotte, Seneca, Muncy and Stockbridge Indians settled in the Indian Territory about the same time the Delawares came here.

In 1890, I married Jane Chapman, a white woman, and we have three children, one daughter and two sons living.

SUPERSTITIONS

I am a strong believer in dreams and I believe if something happens, though many miles away, it will be revealed to us in a dream. I have dreamed things concerning my family and I know the dreams have come true. I believe when the eyelid flutters it is a warning of some unexpected happening.

PROPERTY

My father owned the building on Second and Johnstone, where the Maltby Brothers Hardware Store now stands, two buildings on the southwest corner of Second Street and Dewey Avenue, one building east of the Elks Club on Second Street and the vacant lot at Second and Osage. He sold the Capital Hill Addition of 55 acres for \$55,000. He added the Armstrong first, second, third, fourth Additions to Bartlesville. My father was uneducated and signed his name with an X but he was a very intelligent man.

RELICS

I have some silver ornaments, worn by my grandmother over a hundred years ago. They are about the size of a silver dollar, and she wore six down the outside of each legging. My father gave these ornaments to me in 1905. I think there are two of them left and my daughter has them now.

I have a Bible printed in the Delaware language.