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Field Worker: Davey P. Heady,
June 23, 1937.

Interview with Mitchell B. Arendell (Englishman)
West Monroe St.,
McAlester, Okla.

I was born September 7, 1855, in Smith County, Tennessee. My father, John Lewis Arendell, was born in Tennessee. I do not know the exact place nor date of his birth or death. He was a Confederate soldier during the Civil War, but I do not know what Company or regiment he belonged to. My cousin, Pinkie McGee, was major of the same company. My father was some kind of an officer, but that is all I knew about the War as I was only six years old at that time.

I came to Indian Territory with my father, step-mother and brother, Ben, in 1872, from Decatur, Texas.

My mother had died at the close of the Civil War.

We waded Red River at the Illinois Bend, on the head of Mud Creek.

We farmed the following year for Jim Dibble, just across Red River at the Illinois Bend in the Chickasaw Nation.

My father built the first ferry boat that was used at this crossing. It was a partnership boat, owned by a Mr. Jones on the south side of the River and Capt. Miller and my father on the north side.

In 1873, while we were farming for Jim Dibble, the Government made the survey. They made mile and quarter mile sections through the Chickasaw Nation.

In 1874 my brother, Ben, and I farmed forty acres for Mr. Dibble. It was about seven years during that time that we were bothered with the Indians stealing and killing, and causing great trouble among the white people. They were not Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, but were mostly Apaches and Comanches, and some Kiowas. I remember a family named Hatfield lived at Jintown, just across the river in Indian Territory. All of this family was killed except two boys, King Hatfield who died about ten years ago at Ardmore, Oklahoma, and I don't remember the other boy's name, but they were the only ones who escaped. The Comanches and Seminoles had a reservation at Ft. Sill. There would be from fifty to one hundred Indians on a reservation. White people would have to get a pass or permit from the Government of the Nation or Robert L. Owens, who was Agent for all Five Civilized Tribes, to enter a reservation.

In 1879 a man by the name of Bob Rogers, a cripple, came to Jintown. He was a blacksmith by trade and the people

of the community promised to fence his farming ground and plant and cultivate his crop if he would do the blacksmith work for the community. This he agreed to do. All the men were in the woods making posts to fence his farm and at noon they sat down to eat. The small boys were on a hill nearby hunting, when they came running back saying wild Indians were coming on horses. There were about eighteen men present and several men raised up. When the Indians saw us they must have thought we were prepared to fight, so they turned and headed back toward the reservation.

About 1881 we had our last battle with the Indians. We heard that a group of about eighteen had killed a family just out of the Territory, over in Texas. This family was named Box, and the Indians had burned their house as well as murdered them. The Indians started toward Jintown, so we headed them off in a valley at the Illinois Bend. The battle began at midnight and by daybreak we had only one man wounded and had killed sixteen of the Indians, and captured the other two. Jake Gardenhirer was shot in the leg with an arrow and we had to cut the stick off and

pull the arrow out on the opposite side of his leg. Mr. Gardenhirer's family and his mother had been killed by the Indians before this. After we captured the remaining Indians, he tried to make one of them talk and tell who killed his mother and family. The Indian would only grunt, so he shot him. Then we took the other one to Ft. Sill, and turned him loose to see if any more Indians were on the reservation. No more showed up, if there were others, so that was the last battle we had with the Indians.

We kept missing stock for several years, and searched the country for more Indians but never found any. Finally we found a colony of negroes at the head of Mountain Creek, and they had all our stolen stock. We killed them, and since that time that place has been called Nigger Prong. We were never bothered after that.

Farming in Territory Days.

To enter the Territory to farm, a white man had to get a permit from the Governor of the Nation, or Robert L. Owens, agent of the Five Civilized Tribes. This permit was just for one year and cost five dollars.

These could also be issued by the county and probate judges and signed by the county and probate clerk and sheriff. The permit was three dollars and a half; sheriff fees, one dollar; clerks fees, fifty cents. Total, five dollars.

A twenty acre farm was considered a large farm because of the slow way of farming. Oxen were used mostly to break and cultivate the ground.

The closest market was at Denison, Texas, and Shreveport, Louisiana. It took several days to go to market from Jimtown, so we always took several days' supply of food. Cotton sold for .05 to .08 for lint. Corn sold for .15 to .25 per bushel. We got all our supplies, which were very few, at Denison, Texas. We made or raised most everything at home that we needed.

I built the first frame house, west of Ardmore, in the Territory for a ranchman. We hauled the lumber from Denison in wagons, pulled by oxen. It was a four-room, frame house, covered with drawn shingles of oak. We had nothing but the square iron nails which were bought at Denison, but we could get different sizes. They had square heads, and

tapered from the head to a point, and they would not bend but were easy to break.

I later moved to Loco, Indian Territory. I was the first white man to build a house at Loco. It was a one-room, log house, and later became the only store at Loco. Jim Merritt had a ranch there. The store was owned by A. R. Biggs. Mr. Biggs got his supplies for the store at Gainesville, Texas, and hauled them in wagons to Loco. They forded Red River at the head of Mud Creek.

Beginning in 1889 I went farther west and worked four years, hunting buffalo. We had to follow the buffalo, for in the spring they would range north, and in the fall and winter they went south. An average buffalo weighed from three to four hundred pounds and his hide brought from fifty to one hundred and fifty dollars each. Some people used the hides for a buffalo robe, which was very expensive. During a season, we would kill from ^{hundred} one to three hundred buffaloes. The meat was very coarse and most always tough, but sold for a good price. The tongues sold from .18 to .20 each, and the meat sold from .25 to .40 per pound. In four years time the buffaloes were all killed out, and I came to Pittsburg County where I have made my home since.