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BULLETT, MAXIE

INTERVIEW

#12607

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Journalist, Billie Byrd,
December 20, 1937.
Interview with Maxie Bullett,
Age 58, Ochai tribal
town (tulwa), Hanna,
Oklahoma.

ADOPTED ENGLISH WORDS.

As the white people were settling the Indian Territory amidst the Indians, they began to take interest in and tried to civilize those Indians just as fast as could be done. It was the federal people who first placed among the Indians agents whose duty was to work among the Indians and show them the way of the white laws, to teach and civilize them into white life. The agents brought missionaries into the Indian country as another way of bringing about the change in Indian life.

During all the changes of their lives, the Indians in talking about the different officers or happenings that took place in their midst used the English names because they could find no word in their native language what they thought would be appropriate to these new things. In talking even among themselves they turned to the white usage of the words.

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With the advent of different titles, still the Indians were using the white words to name the titles as with the coming of the Dawes Commission and so it went on when the oil leases were made.

They began to say "oil leases" as they also used the word "royalty." Along with this time, the pipe lines were spoken about by the white people and it was natural that the Indians began to use "pipe line" in their language.

To say administrator was only to say "administrata" when that came into existence, as they said "shection" for section when the country was being sectionized.

That was the way the use of the English words became known to the full bloods and although they didn't know how to talk the English language, those early Indian full bloods showed they were able in the using of the English language because the Indian department was called "depatrent" by them also. It was probably as far back as 1849 that the mixing of the words was begun.

The Indian Territory Indians would often speak of making trips to Oklahoma, although they didn't have

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much business in that country. They would travel to the western part of the country to the Chickasaw country, then on down south into the country of Texas where the best whiskey could be bought. On a designated day they would gather at some place in the best humor and happy spirits. Being mounted on lively horses, they would show-off their horsemanship accompanied by the shooting of guns. They would leave early in the mornings, the destination being Denison, Texas, where it was known that the best whiskey could be found. It took about four days to make the trip to Denison and the return trip was never made at any other time but only on early mornings. At this time, too, the using of the mixed English was in common use.

At the establishment of the churches, there was an attempt to accomplish its downfall; but they were strong for the political movements. Guns were used in trying to apprehend and stop the church movement. It was at preaching time that many of the opposing men came on the grounds and caused turmoil by picking fights with the peaceful Christians. In a very short period of worship

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come had seen spiritual visions and they later became leaders and courageous ministers in the effort to Christianize their people.

We have been told of how these old trouble-makers discarded their guns for the cause of the church deacons and began to urge the young people to turn from wrong—they knew from experience what was best. It has been told that some of the outstanding leaders among the trouble-makers have been the best churchmen but it was thought they would never be converted from their bad walks. Their lives were lived for the church after they were converted and they died pointing heavenwards.

The older Indians who were forced to move from the eastern homes did suffer hardships, yet there is the question if it was or if it was not best that they were forced to move. We have heard the stories of the hardships they encountered, with the loss of lives, but other nations have suffered the loss of lives to establish peace.

Note: No change is made in the wording of Billie Byrd's manuscripts since he expresses the interviews in typical Indian manner, adding to the value of his work. Ed.