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An interview with Charles Jefferson  
Darwin, Oklahoma.

I was born about 12 miles west of Antlers, Oklahoma, but at the time I was born there was no Antlers. In fact, there was no town nor village nearer than Boggy Depot.

I was born some time in August, 1870. I don't know what day--that is I have forgotten that day.

My father's name was Charles Jefferson and my mother's name was Siney Elapotubbe. She did not go by the name of Jefferson. Although she was married to my father she kept the name of my grandfather. They both died at the old home place where they had lived so long.

My Grandfather's name was Elapotubbe--he had no other name--he was known by that name until his death. During the beginning war between the South and the North, he joined the Southern Army and was in the service until after the conflict. Before he came from the war, my mother and the balance of the folks moved from Sugarloaf County to Jackfork County. After my grandfather had served the war, he came home to where the folks were. My grandfather used to tell us that they sure had a hard time during the war; that the soldiers would go without anything to eat for several days, they did not have sufficient clothing to keep them warm, they would kill anything they saw and build up a

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fire and roast whatever they killed and eat it without any salt nor any bread.

After he came home he took down with smallpox which nearly got him. It took him several months to get over with it, for the Indian doctors did not know how to treat the disease. The disease got scattered through the country, and a good many Indians died from the disease. It was a hard job to get any one to help nurse the sick for they were afraid to go near the sick, for they had heard that it was catching, and I guess it was, for a good many of the Indians caught it and died. When one died, the folks would roll him up in a sheet and roll him into the grave and cover him up.

Those that got well would nurse the sick but it was after a good many of them had died,

My mother died when I was quite small. My father lived until I was about grown, then he died. After my father's death, I lived with my grandfather. He went to work after he came back from the war, put in some new ground, and began to farm. We raised plenty of corn for our use; he started to raising cattle, hogs, and ponies and before he died he had lots of cattle, hogs and ponies and

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had a good farm containing about twelve acres, which was a big farm in those days. We did not have to feed any of the stock for there was plenty of grass where the stock could graze and the hogs got plenty of acorns in the woods so they sure got good and fat. We did not kill but a few hogs for we did not need much. The only thing we needed most was lard as there was lots of wild game--the country was full of deer, turkeys, fish, squirrels, ducks and in fact anything wild to eat; all we had to do was to get out of sight from the house, kill what we wanted and come home.

My father was an Indian doctor--he practiced all over the community, for us Indians lived in communities then. Each community had a doctor, but sometimes they would come after my father--he was not a medicine man, he was an Indian doctor--he practiced with roots, herbs, and things; such as, leaves, barks and the like. He would go out into the woods, dig up the roots and herbs, barks and leaves, put them altogether, put them into a pot and boil them down to the stage he wanted, then he would strain it through the white cloth and put it up in bottles, or he would give it to the man that <sup>was</sup> after some medicine, I don't know what they were for he would

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not tell the secret to any one. When he died it went with him. He did not get much for his practice but the people would pay him by giving him a cow, maybe a hog and sometimes he would get a pony, and some corn or anything they would give him he would take.

I went to school four terms in a neighborhood school at Yellow Spring (Kulli Lakna). I did not learn much in books, and did not learn much English. The teacher was an Indian and he tried to teach us how to talk English, but I did not learn to talk, so I am unable to speak English at all, I can understand a little of it but can't talk much, and I have forgotten all that I did learn in books so I can't read nor write even in my own language.

When I was young I used to play Indian Ball. We used a couple of sticks made out of hickory with a small cup at the end of them, just big enough to hold the ball, which was a small one, but it sure was a hard ball. I did not play in big games for I was not good enough to play in a contested game; that is, between two counties but I used to see some that could catch the ball with the sticks running full speed and could throw it two or three hundred yards. In those big games there were about twenty-five on each side. They some times would fight a battle before the

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game started. The women would get excited as much as the men would and bet everything they had--some would bet the clothes they had on and if they lost, they would pull them off and go back home without anything on except their underwear; and sometimes they would kill one or two at these games. If one was killed they would drag him out under a shade and go on with their ball game. The Indian ball game is a very exciting game and a rough one.

The Indians had another game they played in secret for it was against the law to gamble. They called it Naki Nohmi, (hiding a bullet). It used to be a buck shot. It was similar to a poker game. My grandfather and some more of his friends would get together and go out into the woods and play for two or three days before they would quit. They would hide this buck shot and the first one that found it got the prize. They would bet on it just as you would bet on your cards--the one that found the shot was winner. I used to sit and watch them play. They would not let me play for grandfather said that I was just a kid and he did not want me to play any game of the nature where I would have to gamble.

When I was young I used to assist the United States

Marshals in capturing outlaws; such as horse thieves, cow rustlers and murderers who had fled from other states and landed in this country to keep from being arrested by the officers. Sometimes we had to fight it out with them, some would give up without a fight. These men were mean as they could be--they were the only kind of white men we had in this country long before statehood. It is quite different now.

Our trading post was Boggy Depot--it was several miles from where we lived. My grandfather would go after groceries and it would take him several days to make the trip. After Atoka was established, then he would go to Atoka for our supplies and it took three days to make a trip, but he did not go only about three times a year.

I was nearly grown before I saw my first train. I had not been anywhere only at home, but one day I wanted to see the train. I had heard my grandfather tell about them so I wanted to see one myself, so he took me along one day and took me down to the railroad as the first train came by. After we had gotten to town, it came around the curve. I sure did get scared at the thing, and when I got home I sure had some stories to tell the other folks that were at home.

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I am living on my farm. I have a few cattle and hogs and have a team of mules and am trying to raise something to eat. If I can do that I will be able to feed myself for a while any way, and die happy.