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CAMPBELL, A. L.

INTERVIEW #12509

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SETTLING IN INDIAN TERRITORY and  
INDIAN PAYMENTS

INTERVIEW OF  
A. L. Campbell, age 67, negro, Clear-  
view, Oklahoma

Billie Byrd, Field worker  
Indian-pioneer History  
12-23-37

I entered the Indian Territory along 1893 from Mississippi and it was not an easy thing to secure a location especially if one had a large family, household goods and livestock. There was all that to tend to, provide food for the family, to go out and look for a place to stay. We had to get in touch with some of the Indians or the agent before making any kind of settlement as they had to give their permission but if one went right ahead making preparations to settle, the chances were that they would be chased away from the land. Someone had to be asked and permission given. The "squatters" and "intruders" were many--they were persons making settlements without permit on the Indian lands.

Most of the Indians were seemingly friendly. On meeting strangers at the stores or depot, they would

say, "lease some land?" These remarks and other friendly acts were shown.

The Indians seemed to take the first white pioneers around their country mostly for the protection they thought they could get and then the whites like to tend to the cattle. In those days the Indians were never allowed to use whiskey, but they loved whiskey just like any of the whites but if the government caught anyone selling whiskey to anyone, it was just too bad for them. They (Indians) were anxious to lease their lands to the whites because they were the means of providing their whiskey.

The leases of land were understood to be made for one year at a time. There were no fences and there were no way of knowing the acreage of the land but so large a piece of land was taken as ten, twenty, forty or one hundred acres and the one leasing that particular piece of land used it for the one year.

After the lease was made, nothing was ever said about it from the Indian but they seemed never to forget the day of the lease and just as certain as the year rolled around, they would say, "Time up---- lease 'em again? No lease 'em?"

There were certain times when the Sac and Fox Indians received payments. I don't remember what those payments were for but just as sure as the payment time drew near all those Indians were expectant and glad. Two days before the payments when one came across them in wagons or on horseback, they would all be smiling and talking of "Payments; payments!" The payments were happy times for them. Even when the other tribes received payments, the neighboring tribes would visit around for the purpose of gambling.

In the Sac and Fox tribes, encampments would be made near the agency buildings two weeks before the payments and in all that time, they didn't do anything about their camp but just waited in camp, ate and slept. The old people would just sit around, talking, joking and maybe dance a little. They did just anything to pass away the two weeks of camp life.

They didn't take much time to cook the meals though. The women would fry bread and stack them until so high. The beef would be cut in raw state -- from the choicest bit and cut into pieces. They would select a piece of the raw meat, take a fried

bread, begin to make a meal of it, with the blood from the meat oozing from their mouth.

I had become acquainted with the Sac and Fox tribe and been around the country with them so that when they received their payments, I was the one they chose and was the one sent to stroud to obtain their whiskey. saloons were plentiful in stroud and I had no trouble in securing the whiskey. They never knew when to go to bed for their time was spent in gambling and having a big time. They would stay up way into the night and had no certain time to cease their celebrating.

When I first attempted to enter the Indian Territory I was not allowed to enter with my livestock but I was told to sell them for they would mix with the Indian Territory cattle and that was not allowed. I sold them before I made my entry.

Among the western Indians, they had an odd dish which they relished and that was roast land turtle. The rod of the end gate of the wagon was stuck into the ground with the turtle at the top end this was placed just over the fire. When roasting was complete--the Indians liked it real well.