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Gus Hummingbird,
Field Worker.
May 19, 1937.

Interview with Adam Bean,
Stilwell, Oklahoma.

I was born in Goingshake District in 1880, the son of Jack Bean, who was an old soldier of the Civil War, and Anna Spade, a Cherokee woman. My parents lived in the community now known as Fairfield, where I grew to manhood without an education. My father and mother separated when I was a small child, at which time I was taken by my mother, who had to work at odd jobs in order to raise her small family. Besides me, Mother had two sons by other marriages.

I was raised on a very small farm in the Fairfield community and my mother took care of me until I was about thirteen years of age. Then I left home and stayed with a family by the name of Manus and while there I had to work hard in order to earn enough to buy sufficient clothes, for this family was not a rich family and everybody had to work hard in order to have something to eat.

Mr. Manus did not have any horses at all so we had to swap work in order to get a horse to work. The Manus family

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had a small patch that they cultivated each year, corn and beans being about the only things raised.

I was raised among many Indian boys and the old people were interested in all kinds of games; therefore, I became an athlete. I belonged to an Indian Ball Club, and was a member of the Stalk Shooting and Racing teams.

"BALL CLUB"

This game was similar to the present day foot ball. Usually ten men made a team, but I have played in games where there were as many as fifteen men to the team. The members wore no uniforms, helmets or leg guards; everything was taken off except a garment similar to shorts.

The ball ground was about a hundred yards long and about eighty yards wide and in the center of this ball ground there was a pole about thirty feet long driven in the ground, on top of which was placed some kind of animal head.

The visiting team took the opposite side of this pole. and when the ball was tossed in the air, every player was ready to get the ball and try to hit the head that was on top of the pole. Players were not allowed to use their hands in catching the ball- they had some kind of wooden spoons that

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they used. These spoons were about two feet long and the ball was about two inches in diameter. This ball was not made by just anybody; some old person usually made it.

In matched games the Indians usually stayed near some creek on the day before the game was to be held. The Cherokees at that time were strong believers in "Witching" and had much faith in their Medicine Men. Early in the morning before the game and before the sun came up the Medicine Man would tell them which team was going to win. To prepare the players for the game the Medicine Man would treat their legs in order to make them strong.

"STALK SHOOTING"

This game was known to the Cherokees for many years and was a great gambling game in the early days, according to the older Cherokees. The origin and date of the game are not known but it is still a great sport among the Cherokees. However, the younger generation do not shoot stalks as the Cherokees did forty or fifty years ago. The stalk ground was usually about a hundred and fifty yards long; smooth land and soft dirt. There was not any limit as to the number of members in a team, and I have shot in games where there were fifty men on a side.

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The stalks were piled just exactly one hundred yards apart; these piles being three feet long, two feet thick and about three feet high. The big games were matched weeks in advance, so that the event could be noted throughout the country. Many people came from miles around to see the games and betting took place when the games started.

The members of the teams usually represented two or more communities, as the best shooters were chosen from several teams and made one team. After the teams were chosen the Witcher was chosen by the Matcher.

The day before the game the chosen shooters began to come to the appointed place, often coming many miles. The Matcher of the game and his backers or the gamblers furnished the food, which was usually cooked near the camp grounds.

Every member of the team was not always allowed to shoot, even though he had been chosen, for if the Witcher for the team discovered that a member of the team was weak another player was chosen. The Witcher was a smart man. He could sure tell if the team was going to win or lose, and he would tell the gamblers in which game they would have a chance to win. I

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have seen horses and saddles lost in the Stalk Shootings. They usually made standing bets, for if they did not the better would back out after the Witcher had told which team was going to win.

The bows the players used were made from bois d' arc and the arrows were made from black locust. The spears were made from wagon seat springs, the length of these spikes being from eight to eighteen inches.

Some of the old timers who shot with me are: Johnson Tyler, George Soap, Sam Foreman, Isaac Hummingbird, Henry Walkingstick, Bill Downing, Alex Downing, William Shell, Riley Ragsdale, Ben Squirrel, John Rider, Tom Swimmer, Fixin Blackbird, William England and Toch Ketcher.

The most famous Witchers in these shootings were John Hair, Ben Squirrel, Henry Turn, and Thompson Charles.