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INTERVIEW

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Etta D. Mason
Interviewer
July 12, 1937

Interview with Mrs. Lavina Beal
Tushka, Oklahoma

FORTY YEARS AGO.

Forty years ago at old Skullyville we knew everybody's buggy except the livery rigs, for there were not more than ten or fifteen buggies in the Choctaw Nation. In those days one could ride across the country anywhere for there were no fences to speak of. I recall several pastures owned by wealthy Choctaws that were fenced.

The mail came from Fort Smith to Skullyville every day in a hack in good weather and on horseback in bad weather. Every other day it was carried on horseback as far as Whitefield. These routes were called Star Routes and the carriers traveled about twenty-five miles a day. They had to travel such roundabout ways to get through the country. One route went as far as Blaine.

In all Indian Territory probably the only roads that were worked were those on which toll was paid. One of the toll roads went through the Poteau River bottom at Pull Tight and the other went over Backbone Mountain from Fort Smith south into Texas.

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Most of the teams were ox teams and it took a team two weeks to haul cotton from Tushkahoma and Talihina to Fort Smith, Arkansas, a distance of 100 miles. Several families would band together to make the trip.

Pull Tight is now Braden. The name Pull Tight was given the place because of the difficulty in getting through the crossing. Shakerag became Bokoshe and Needmore became Milton. Cartersville was Hogtown and Oak Lodge was the post office at Skullyville. Skully means money in Choctaw and the Indians referred to it thus because it was the Indian Agency. Skullyville was where the Indians received their annuities the first few years after coming from Mississippi. The old Indian Agency is still standing.