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Field Worker: Gomer-Gower
May 18, 1937

Interview with Charles W. Lofton
Route 1
Wister, Oklahoma.
(4½ miles North)

Born May 29, 1873
Sugar Loaf County
Choctaw Nation
Indian Territory

Parents Father, John Lofton,
Mississippi
(Killed in June, 1873)
Mother, Sarah Jane Lofton
Mississippi
(Buried at Kennedy Cemetery
4 miles north of Wister)

A BIOGRAPHIC SKETCH.

Charles W. Lofton was born on May 29, 1873, in Sugar Loaf, now LeFlore county, in the Indian Territory. His father, John Lofton, a white man, was born in the Choctaw Nation, Mississippi, and was killed by his step brother-in-law, Henry Millian, when Charles, the subject of this sketch, was but two weeks old. This occurred at a point close to Old Monroe, near the Arkansas State line, that being the point at which the elder Lofton located on his arrival in the Indian Territory.

His mother, Sarah Jane Lofton, was also born in the Choctaw Nation, Mississippi, date unknown, and was in

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the removal from that state, under the direction of Adam Morris, a white man. The family settled on Sugar Leaf Creek, a distance of about four miles from the Arkansas state line and about thirty miles south of Fort Smith, Arkansas, where they lived for some time, later moving to a point which is now about four and one-half miles north of Wister, where Mr. Lofton still resides.

Through his mother, Mr. Lofton learned a great deal concerning the early life of the Indians in the Indian Territory. She once told him of the conviction of a young Indian in a Tribal court where Noah Folsom was judge, and which was held at a point about six miles south of Wister. The crime for which this young Indian was convicted was that of stealing and butchering a cow belonging to another Indian. Theft was considered to be the most heinous offense a member of the tribe could commit.

She also related that Robert Morris, a son of the Adam Morris who conducted the removal of a part of the tribe from Mississippi, was a very ruthless character and later shot and killed a white man near Kully Chaha, then a village near Cameron. He was tried but not convicted of this crime.

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While yet a young boy, Mr. Lofton relates that on one occasion he had started to a branch or small creek for a bucket of water and had proceeded but a short distance from the house when he saw a bunch of animals grazing. He took them to be yearling cows. There were from forty to fifty head in the bunch. Being surprised at the sight of so many appearing at one time, he called to his mother and called her attention to the strange sight. His mother soon observed that it was a band of deer grazing in the high grass as quietly as though it was a bunch of cattle, and that, at a distance of not more than one hundred and fifty yards from the house. Hogs ran at large and were common property, in the main. However, a Mr. Tarby, a well-to-do Indian, had a large bunch of his own hogs which he identified by earmarks. This mark of ownership of the hogs was duly respected by all. Unmarked hogs were considered to be public property and were used at will by anyone needing meat.

Mr. Lofton attended school at a Choctaw Indian school which was conducted at a point about two miles west of the present town of Wister, before the Rock Island Railway was constructed. In 1893 Mr. Lofton recalls

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a per capita payment was made to the Choctaws amounting to \$103.00, and in the aggregate amounted to \$4,000,000.00. This payment was made under the direction of Chief Green McCurtain and such was the perfection of the system under which this payment was made, no complaint was ever registered.

He relates that had it not been for the lure of a possible liberal cash payment from the sale of segregated lands, the Choctaws would have resisted a severance of their tribal lands. They seemed to realize that a severance would mean a dissolution of their tribe and they now look back with regret that this dissolution was ever brought about.
