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BERRYHILL, ALEC.

INTERVIEW #8536

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Jefferson Berryhill,
Field Worker.
June 29, 1937.

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Abraham Snakeya. The Escaped Killer.
Interview With Alec Berryhill and others.

No man alive knows anymore of the escaped killer, Abraham Snakeya, than Alec Berryhill, because he was brought up with Snakeya as true friends. Once they made a vow to stand up for each other no matter what the cause, and this agreement is still kept.

Abraham Snakeya was a fullblood Creek Indian, the son of David Snakeya. He was born near the church of Little Coweta, which is about eight miles northwest of Okmulgee. It was believed that he committed his first crime by killing a fullblood Creek Indian by the name of blind Robert Grayson, it was never proved. The body was found in the Salt Creek and the night before Snakeya and Grayson had been together drinking whiskey. When last seen they were going southwest of Okmulgee, and the next morning Snakeya came home alone. He denied any knowledge of killing him. It is said that Robert Grayson had received some money, about five hundred dollars, from the sale of his land and had the money on him when he was killed.

Snakeya lived around Okmulgee and married an Indian woman who had a younger sister. One day he had another fullblood Creek Indian by the name of Jack go down to Muskogee, to see about some business. Before that, Nero

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had asked Snakeya many times for the hand of the girl to marry, but time and again he had been refused. It is the belief of many that Nero went with him to Muskogee, thinking to persuade him when under the influence of liquor. All the way to Muskogee, and back to Okmulgee, he had asked for the girl. Snakeya held his peace till at last as a final attempt Jack Nero promised to give him a very pretty horse, a saddle, and a bridle. This promise made Snakeya very angry and he reminded Nero that he had a wife and didn't need another woman. They quarreled all the rest of the way home. When they reached home, Jack Nero got out of the buggy and went into the house of Snakeya to talk to the girl. Pretty soon he came out to Snakeya, who was just unharnessing his team, and said he would give him the saddle horse and take the girl in trade whether he liked it or not. Snakeya picked up the breast yoke he had just dropped on the ground and struck Nero on the head, and he died instantly. Then Snakeya went into the house, got some of his things and after telling his wife and son good-bye he left knowing that he could not beat the law again.

He left home at the age of twenty, in the year 1910. Since then he has never returned, yet there maybe some one here who knows that he is still alive. The court claimed

him as dead and his heirs sold his land. If he is still alive as it is claimed, he is nearing the age of fifty years. Many of his friends say that they could never forget his looks and they expect to see him come back some day.

That was one man who got away with his crime so far, perhaps never to be apprehended.

