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Whistler, Lee

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5669

Field Worker: Lenna M. Rushing  
May 10, 1937

Interview with Ed Godwin (Negro)  
Route 2  
5 miles S., 1 Mile E.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  MI. S.  
Stroud, Oklahoma.

Born 1876  
Alabama

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#### BIOGRAPHY.

~~When I was a small boy my parents moved from~~  
Alabama to a farm near Ardmore in the Chickasaw Nation.  
We farmed there for several years, and then moved up  
into the Sac and Fox run territory.

Just before we moved, there was a big fire in  
Ardmore. The cotton gin exploded and most of the  
business section of the town was burnt. There were  
only a few buildings left and it took quite a while to  
rebuild the town. That explosion could be heard for  
miles and miles around. Sound was noticeable at  
greater distances then, because there was no traffic  
or other noises to drown it out.

We came to Stroud in 1901 while the town was  
still being built. I helped erect the building in  
which Mr. Luma has his hardware store now, and also the  
one where J. B. Charles' bank is now. Then his bank was

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located one block west of its present site where the drug store and bus stop is.

The streets were marked into blocks, but they were very rough and hard to travel on. There were hitching posts all up and down the main street.

Later I moved out to the Sac and Fox reservation and started working for Mr. Lee Patrick, who was then agent to the Sac and Fox Indians. I was a handy man in general, and also worked in the stockyard. Then when Mr. Patrick left that office, I started working for Mr. Conklin in the same capacity.

I knew Mr. Conklin and Mr. Charles (J. B. Charles) both pretty well. They were the big money men around here. The Indians paid a double price for everything they bought in their store. Money didn't mean anything to the Indians, though. Quite often they would cash a check for a thousand dollars at the Sac and Fox bank (in the trading post), and spend it before evening.

When the agency was to be marked into town sites Mr. Conklin bought ten acres of land from old man Conley and seven acres from Mary McCoy, Isaac McCoy's wife. These were adjoining each other and were situated where the store (Peck's Store) and the old red store are now.

Leo Whistler had a store up near the present road to the mission where the row of trees are. There was a well back of his store where most of the visitors to Sac and Fox Agency watered their stock. The big watering trough beside the well was about two and a half feet high and six feet long, and made out of native wood.

I can't understand where all the game in the Deep Fork bottom has gone to. When I was working out there, I used to go fishing all of the time. We used a seine, and our party would always catch more fish--big fish they were, too--than we could carry home. Squirrel, minks and other wild animals were plentiful. All a person had to do was start out walking in the woods, and find all the game you wanted.

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