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Field Worker: Don Whistler
 April 17, 1937

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BIOGRAPHY OF: Chas. E. Guernsey
 1951 N. W. 12th St.
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BORN: 1849, in Niles, Michigan

I was born in Niles, Michigan in 1849 and while I was still a boy we moved to Illinois and later to Iowa. I was living in Iowa when I heard that the government needed men to help move the Indians out of Kansas, so I sent in my application, and was accepted. I went to Lincoln County and went to work in 1869 when I was twenty-one years old.

I went to the new Sac and Fox Agency in the Indian Territory in March of 1870. The Sac and Foxes had been moved to their new reservation in the fall of 1869. Through a mistake, they had located too far east and were really in the Creek country. The Creeks protested and asked for a new survey, in the spring of 1870.

They Sac and Foxes moved further west and the agency was located in a big horse-shoe bend of the Deep Fork River about six miles south of the present town of Stroud.

Miller, who was the Indian Agent and Dr. Cook, the government Doctor for the Indians, and I lived in a long log house and kept 'batch' that first year.

One time while we were eating, an Indian by the name of Chuck-a-ho (Shack-a-ho) came along. I had learned enough Sauk to talk a little with the Indian, and Miller told me to invite him in to eat with us. While we were eating Miller asked Chuck-a-ho why he didn't wear pants? I did the inter-

pretending. Chuckabo asked Miller if he would give him ³¹⁰ some pants, and Miller said that he would. So Miller told me to go down to John Whistler's store and buy a pair of pants for Chuck-a-ho. The next time we saw him, he was wearing the pants, but he had cut the seat and the crotch out and was wearing them like leggins. When asked why he had done that, he said that they choked his seat.

That first year the Government provided the Sac and Foxes with rations which were issued every other day. They were given Salt Pork, Flour, Lard, green coffee, and tobacco. I remember being a dinner guest at an Indian camp one time, and as a special delicacy they melted a cup of Lard and gave it to me to drink.

There was a company of soldiers stationed at the Sac and Fox Agency, about one hundred, I believe. They were given rations every other day, but on the alternate days for the Indians.

When I first went to the Agency we hauled supplies from Kansas City. We had a great big wagon with six mules to the wagon. I remember one time we went after potatoes. The weather was cold. We took some hay with us but that didn't last so after that we cut down cottonwood trees and let the mules eat the tiny branches. However, we did have grain for them. We loaded up six wagons with potatoes and started toward home. When we were near Ottawa, Kansas, the weather turned extremely cold and all of the potatoes froze. We hauled them along and they began to rot. When we got to Honey Falls we dumped the whole load.

Sometimes we would be six weeks making a trip. Later

the Government made an arrangement to buy supplies by ³¹¹contract in Arkansas and they were delivered by the seller.

There was a great deal of sickness among the Sac and Foxes that first year. I believe there was about seven hundred died between the first payment and the second payment. Dr. Cook was the first doctor for the Sac and Foxes and was succeeded by Dr. Williams.

One of my duties at the agency was to drive the Ambulance. It was not the same as an ambulance these days. But was somewhat like an old stage coach or a hack. The drivers' seat was raised above the others. The seats for passengers were a long ways of the coach and faced each other. We usually hitched four mules to it.

I believe it was in 1870 and thereafter for several years that the Government tried to get all the tribes of the Territory together for a council. They met at Okmulgee. I drove the "Ambulance" that hauled the Sac and Fox chiefs to that council in 1870 and 1871. There was Miller, the Agent, Keekuk, Cheek-o-shuk, Potaquaw and several others of the tribe who were braves. Some of them rode horseback. I remember very well the first year that I was to meet them in a grove of trees just east of the Mission School at sunrise.

Okmulgee was not much of a town at that time. There was only about seven stores. One of them was the Patterson Store.

The Kiowas, Gaddos and Apaches didn't want to come to that council but they finally agreed. However, they went into camp on a creek just west of Okmulgee and refused to go any further until they had a feast and smoked a pipe of peace.

So they were provided with a big barbecue and all joined in a big smoke. Afterward they went into the Council. They hesitated to go to this Council because they had had trouble with the other tribes with whom they were going to meet.

There wasn't any Post Office at the Sac and Fox Agency in the beginning, and I had to go on horseback to Okmulgee to get the mail. I didn't go at any regular time, just about once in two or three weeks. It was fifty-two miles to Okmulgee.

While I was at the Agency they made a brick yard about one and a half miles south of the Agency. I hauled bricks from that yard over northwest of the Agency across Deep Fork where they were building a house for Keekuk. They also built the first school house of bricks from that brick-yard. It is still standing today as a part of the class rooms at the Sac and Fox Mission School.

The first school was in a log house and a Miss Honeysuckle was the first teacher. She had about sixteen or seventeen pupils. She taught there for two years. Among my many other duties, I had to substitute for Miss Honeysuckle for a few days.

When the new school was built, they had a big barbecue and invited all the Indians. Each child that was going to school was given two suits of clothes.

The governor bought cattle for the Indians but most of them died with ticks (Texas Fever) The wolves were bad to kill the calves. However the colts suffered the most from the wolves. They would hamstring a colt and eat just a little and leave the rest. Even so, there were lots of wild horses in the country. I remember of counting sixty-four in one herd.

There was a cattle trail near the Agency. There would be about two thousand and five hundred head in a herd, with about seven cowboys and one cook for each herd. I have seen as many as five herds go by in one day. They were being driven to Montana.

One of these herds belonged to a man by the name of Chisholm. I don't think it was the famous Jessie Chisholm, but it was some relative of his. He had a ranch down on the Canadian River. I asked him what he would take for one hundred head of them and he told me four dollars a head, for the good ones. So I said, "Out em out!" After he and his men had out out the one hundred head, he said, "I will give you one more for good measure. I had been saving my money and had the cash to pay for them.

The Sac and Foxes objected to my grazing my cattle on their land. They said that I should be adopted into the tribe and become one of them. I didn't want to do that, so I sold the cattle to John Whistler.

One time when the Government was making payment to the Sac and Foxes a man by the name of Enoch Hague, who was the agent for the Southern Division, made a speech to the Sac and Fox Council. It was a long talk and he told them that he wanted them to become civilized and live like white man, that he wanted them to become Christians and love Jesus Christ. When he had finished, one of the Sac and Fox Chiefs by the name of Check-o-skuk got up and replied angrily, "What do you want-- love Jesus Christ like white man. White man killed Jesus Christ. Indian didn't kill Jesus Christ!"

Another Sac and Fox Chief was Pa-ta-qua who had three wives at that time. Keekuk was another chief, and he had two wives at that time.

As a result of the Civil War, the Indians attached to the Sac and Fox Agency had a lot of claims against the government. Finally the government agreed to settle and sent a lot of forms to be filled out by the claimants. The agent gave me a bag with about twenty-five pounds of those forms and sent me down to old Shawnee town to get the claims written up. I went on horseback. When I got to the North Canadian River, it was in flood. After a while an Indian swam the river pulling a kind of boat behind him. It was made of green buffalo hides stretched on a frame-work of poles. The Indian told me to leave my horse on the north side of the river, that it would be taken care of and to ride across the river in the boat. Which I did. The Indian swam and pulled the boat across.

I was there about six weeks getting the claims all fixed up. About sixty per cent of those claims were paid. At that time there was an Irishman running the store at Shawnee town. I think his name was Clay. The store was the typical Steek-ade kind used so much in those days as stores.

In December of 1871 I took the Sac and Fox Chiefs and some braves to Muskogee in the ambulance. They were on their way to Washington to see President Grant. They took the first Passenger train that went north from Muskogee. After they arrived in Washington, they had to wait days and days. Finally they were granted an audience and went to the place appointed. They sat in chairs along the wall and waited a long time, then a man came and ordered for them to follow him.

When they were ushered into Grant's presence he said, "Well, what do you want? I can only see twenty minutes."

Grant proceeded to have things investigated. I don't know whether the Sae and Foxes got what they wanted or not. It was on this trip that one of the Sae and Fox braves by the name of Qui-quan-a-Pesk-qua took sick with pneumonia and was taken to the hospital. The chiefs reported that he was given a nice room and excellent care. He died and was buried at Arlington Cemetery.

I remember one time, that a large company of soldiers were moving from Fort Sill to Fort Gibson. They had one wagon with about five tons of bacon in it. The mules got stuck in the river, so the captain had the mules unhitched from the wagon and a long rope fastened to the wagon tongue. He then ordered the soldiers to strip and get into the water and pull the wagon out. It was winter and the water was very cold. They surely hated to do it, but they got the wagon out.

I worked for the Sae and Fox agency about five years and then went up into Kansas to take up land. I married soon after that. In 1889 I left Kansas and moved to the Texas panhandle for my wife's health.

When the Cheyenne and Arapaho country was opened in 1892 I made the run and secured a farm where the present town of Strong City now stands, however I had nothing to do with starting the town. I was living in Roger Mills County. A man by the name of Lum Baker and I were partners in the ownership of a ranch in the Texas panhandle of fifty-six sections of land. We had about three thousand head of cattle on that ranch.

Our brand was the Bar HX. (a horizontal bar above and across the top of the two letters like this: **HX**) It was made with a running iron. I remember one deal I made shortly after the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho country when I sold a man in Montana eight hundred head of cattle for sixteen dollars a head.

The Buffalo Grass in that country was fine cattle feed. It would be a great thing if they could get enough Buffalo Grass seed to put that country back into grass. There are lots of people who think that Buffalo Grass does not have seeds but it does. They grow close down to the ground.

THE END