



KEZER, J. D.

INTERVIEW.

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Journalist  
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Interview with J. D. Kezer  
Okemah, Oklahoma

Fish and Wild Game

We traveled overland from Weleetka. My father and I saw what is now Okemah, Oklahoma, for the first time from a hill five miles east of town. Okemah was a city of tents and they looked like great white shells on the side of a green hill.

The first school I attended in Okemah was taught by Judge S. L. O'Bannon, now of Okmulgee. The second day I attended classes the teacher resigned.

The first fish I caught were from two large ponds, one in the present Phelan addition, west part of town, and at another place on North Seventh Street.

My first wild duck was seen on the pond then just back of the home of Martin L. Frericks on North Third Street and my first coyotes were heard on the addition known as the Mildred Heights in the southern part of town.

There was little for a boy to do in those days but to fish and hunt. My first hunting companion was .

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a full blood Indian boy named Woxie Harjo. He was a crippled boy and it was necessary for us to hunt a great deal on horses, from which we shot rabbits, squirrels, quail and ducks. I recall the first Indian ball game I saw was on a hill some place between here and Henryetta along about 1903 or 1904.

There were hundreds of Indians or it seemed that there were then. The players wore breech-clouts, fox tails and war-paint. Well, it turned out to be a battle instead of a game and many of the Indians are wearing ~~scars to this day as a result of that battle or similar~~ battles in other places.

I remember our first Fourth of July celebration when it was estimated that 5,000 persons were in attendance, coming from twenty miles away in buggies, wagons and on horseback. The celebration was held in a pasture north of Okemah, now known as the Dill Addition.

There were traveling United States Courts where the prisoners were handcuffed and chained to the wagons while the court was in session.