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Interview with Charlie G. King
Interviewer, W. T. Holland
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I was born near Sedan, Kansas, June 11, 1871. I came into the Osage country with my parents in 1879, at the age of eight years. But prior to that, I had seen quite a lot of Indian life, as my grandmother King owned a farm that bordered on the Osage Nation, and as a youngster I was often at my grandmother's. The Osage Indians would come to my grandmother's farm and buy butter, eggs, milk and chickens. They were drawing about \$15.00 per month per capita from the government and they bought everything they needed instead of raising it.

Later on, in 1879 my parents moved into the Cherokee Nation, southwest of Caney, Kansas, but we were in a settlement of Delaware Indians and my father leased land from a Delaware Indian. As was the custom then, the lease ran for several years, so my father improved the farm some. He dug a well and added to the buildings. Our home was a log house,

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with the chimney in the north end of the house.

The houses were more or less open and the chimney was put in the north end so as to get the full benefit of all the heat.

There were several Indian children nearby and I soon learned to speak the Delaware language.

SCHOOLS.

We had a Subscription School in the neighborhood which both Indians and white children attended. Our seats were made from slabs of wood, set on pegs. Our teacher would tell us "to sit up straight and have strong backs." It was hard to do this, especially in the afternoon when we were tired. Our school building was a log house with a dirt floor and school ran usually for three months in each year.

CHURCHES.

The first church building was in a Delaware settlement about ten miles south of Caney, Kansas.

It was used by both Methodist and Baptist preachers, each preaching every month. The preachers usually came on Saturday and would preach Saturday night and two times on the following Sunday. The Methodist preacher, who was a circuit rider, was the Reverend Mr. Jameson and the Baptist preacher was George D. Sears.

The full bloods also used the building for their preaching services. They usually had an interpreter, as the full bloods did not speak English. So, the interpreter would translate the sermon for the benefit of the white people in the congregation.

In the Fall, protracted meetings would be held. The Indians would come in crowds and camp during the meeting which usually lasted from two to three weeks. The Indians would furnish the food and would kill cattle and barbecue them on the grounds.

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Along about 1887, when I was sixteen years of age, I worked for Jake Bartles. He had a trading post where Bartlesville now is, also a water mill on the Caney River near the present site of the city. Here we came to get our corn ground. He later ground wheat.

In the winter time, during the extremely cold weather, we have gone for days at a time without any bread because the weather was too cold to make the trip to the mill. However, we had Irish potatoes which made a good substitute for bread.

~~Mr. Bartles also had one portable steam sawmill.~~

He later had three of these mills. These mills would be moved into a community and would saw lumber for a while, until local needs were met, then they would move on to another tract of timber.

I helped turn practically all the sod between Bartlesville and Dewey.

It took two hands to plow.

We had a plow that cut twenty-two inches. A lot of that county at that time had persimmon sprouts, so we took a front wheel off a wagon and attached it to the side of the plow beam, near the end, to make the plow run steady. This wheel kept the plow from "kicking" when it hit a solid root.

My partner drove the oxen, and held the plow in place. We drove four oxen to the plows and we cut twenty-two inches and plowed about six inches deep.

We raised corn and wheat. From fifty to sixty bushels of corn per acre was usual in the virgin soil.

MORE ABOUT THE OSAGE INDIANS.

When a boy, I was over in the Osage country a lot. The Osage Indian lived in Wigwam villages then, and wore blankets. They had quite a large village at Grayhorse.

I remember when the government built some frame houses for the Osages. These were in the form of a

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village, in rows and all alike, to keep down any trouble which might arise from one Osage having a better house than another. But it was not a success, as the Indians did not take to the houses at all, and it was a long time before any of them could be persuaded to live in a house. They used the new houses, but they used them to store feed and as places to hang their saddles and bridles.

In other words, they continued to live in their wigwams and to use the houses for barns.

They slept in their wigwams and cooked on fires outside. These wigwams were built of bark and poles. The poles were tied at the top with bark and the sides were made of great pieces of bark. This made a good building.

About all the land cultivated in the Osage country was what was known then, as "Squaw Patches." These were plots of ground cultivated by squaws.

My wife is the daughter of Ed Sunday, Cherokee pioneer of Collinsville.