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Field Worker: Carl R. Sherwood,
June 21, 1937

Interview with Willie Lerblance
Checotah, Oklahoma.

My grandfather was Elija Hermigine Lerblance.

He was born in March, 1836, son of a Louisiana Frenchman, and Vacey Gentry, who was the daughter of Elijah Gentry, a white who married a full-blood Catawba India.. He came from Alabama to the Creek Nation with his parents at the age of 12 years. After coming to the Creek Nation he attended the Asbury Mission for a term of fifteen months. At the age of seventeen years he began learning the blacksmith trade. While there employed, he married Miss Bosen, daughter of Amos Bosen, King of the Hitchita town.. To this union were born five children.

His wife died, a christian, in 1872. She was a member of the M. E. Church.

In 1857 Mr. Lerblance moved to Cusseta, where he worked in the Government blacksmith shop until the outbreak of the war in 1861. He joined the Confederate service as a private, but was made a sergeant in three months, and in 1862 rose to the rank of lieutenant,

which commission he held until the termination of the war. After ^{the war} he returned to his family and the farm, which was located near the old Council grounds, in the Creek Nation. His property consisted of an old wagon, a pair of oxen, two cows, and calves, one pig, and thirty-five cents in coin. From this time until 1880 he spent his life partly on the farm and partly in the blacksmith shop.

In 1881 he went in the cattle business with W. E. Gentry. They had about 2,500 head of cattle; one store at Checotah with a stock of general merchandise amounting to about \$12,000, and a gin at the same place.

In February, 1873, Mr. Lerblance married Miss Nellie daughter of Jobe Fife, Fife a farmer, and son of Jimmie Fife. To this union were four children born.

Mr. Lerblance owns one of the finest homes in the vicinity of Hitchita, (200 acres of farm land and one square mile of pasture); 400 head of cattle and always has about fifty head of horses and mules on the range.

Mr. Lerblance served four years as clerk of Muskogee district and eight years as the Supreme Court Clerk. At three different periods he served as District

Judge of the Muskogee district. He was once elected National Treasurer but declined to serve. In 1891 he filled the unexpired term of Samuel Bradley, in the House of Kings, who died in May of that year.

Mr. Lerblance was opposed to the sale of Oklahoma, fearing it would cause the entire opening of the Indian Territory. He thought it would be wise to use it for grazing purposes and thereby secure funds sufficient to satisfy the U. S. Government for her claim on this land. Judge Lerblance was a gentleman of good character and pleasant manners, and his education was far above the average.