I was born in 1894, in Williams County, Texas, son of Alexander S. Lewis and Elizabeth Dawson. My paternal grandfather was Reverend Stephen Meriwether Lewis, born in 1819, who was removed to Texas in 1850 as Chaplain in Colonel George Baylor's regiment of Texas Cavalry, Confederate Army, and served during the Civil War. Reverend Lewis was a direct male relative of Meriwether Lewis, the explorer.

My father, Alex S. Lewis, a Texas Ranger, was a soldier on the Mexican border, also a Confederate soldier, 26th Texas Cavalry.

My mother's people, the Dawsons, slightly Cherokee admitted to Cherokee citizenship after the Civil War, were descendants of the Rogers family. Mother's maternal grandmother was Polly Ann Rogers, half-sister of Tyan (Tiana, Talihina) Rogers who was the Indian wife of Sam Houston. (Tyan was a widow, her first husband was named Gentry). She and Houston were married, Indian ritual, at John Jolly's house, Chief of the Western Cherokees. Sam lived
at that time near the mouth of the Illinois now near Gore, on a farm at present owned by R. B. Carlisle. She married again after Houston's departure and did not grieve herself to death as told in a popular legend.

The Dawson family originated in South Carolina. The original John Rogers, father of Polly Ann and Tyan was a Tory captain in the British Army in the Carolinas during the American Revolution - he was called Hell-Fire Jack by the Cherokees. He had three Cherokee wives and fought with Bushyhead (Captain John Stewart) in the Florida Campaign. He was father of Captain John Rogers, Chief of the Western Cherokees, of the Grand-Saline, who came to western Arkansas in 1817. He brought his father, the Tory Captain, with him and settled at Big Mulberry Bend, about twenty miles south of the present Fort Smith. The old ruins of the home are still there. Rogers came from the home, Ross Landing on the Tennessee, near Lookout Mountain. He was a leading man among his people for forty years - a friend of President Andrew Jackson - was of the treaty party and a slaveholder. (This is the family history told me by W. C. Rogers, last Principal Chief of the Cherokees, and his
sister, Joanna Rogers Duncan, grandchildren of Captain John Rogers. I have also searched old family records and visited afore-mentioned locations to make our family history as complete as possible.)

Captain John Rogers, one-eighth Cherokee, died in Washington in 1846 and is buried there in a military cemetery. The Rogers were supplanted by John Ross, leader of the anti-treaty party, who became chief of the Cherokees after the general Removal in 1828. Captain John Rogers and Colonel A. P. Chouteau had established the salt works on the east side of the Grand River, near the present town of Salina, in Mayes County. They manufactured large quantities of salt which was sold to the garrison at Fort Gibson as well as the Cherokees and other Indian tribes. Chouteau died in 1832 - possession passing to Rogers. Then Ross, Principal Chief, in the name of the Cherokees, took over the salt works and gave the concession to his brother, Lewis Ross. Ross asserted the springs were the property of the national domain of the Cherokee tribe and might be leased to a new party if deemed expedient.

Rogers and his sons had a distillery at Spavinaw Creek and they had an old grist mill, said to have been left by
the Mormons during the time they were there, which distillery was also confiscated by Ross. He claimed that he did this for the general good of the Indians.

Rogers was in Washington presenting his claims for possession or re-imbursement for the salt works at the time of his death. Joanna Rogers Duncan, granddaughter of Captain John Rogers, told me that her father, Charles Rogers, had often told her of his father's bitterness and grief, the family feeling was that it had hastened his death.

Captain John Rogers had several sons, among them Charles Rogers, born at Big Mulberry. Charles went to school at the Cherokee Male Seminary at Tahlequah and became Judge of the Cherokee Nation in the Coweeescoowee District. He was the father of W. C. Rogers, last Principal Chief of the Cherokees. He lived two miles north of the present town of Skiatook, near the mouth of Candy Creek, after the Civil War but before the Civil War he lived on Dog Creek, two or three miles southeast of Claremore. His residence seemed to be changed with his marriages, twice married to white wives.

W. C. Rogers, last Chief of the Cherokee Nation, was
LEWIS, STEPHEN R.  NINTH INTERVIEW.

born in 1847, on Grand River in the Cherokee Nation, about sixty miles east of Tulsa. He was reared on his father's ranch near the present town of Skiatook and died in 1917. He was the son of Judge Charles Rogers, and I consider Chief Rogers the finest looking man I have ever seen. He was six feet, two inches in height, had a fine figure - the leader type. I don't know much about his personal history but he drove an ammunition wagon in the Battle of Honey Springs in 1863. He established the first large merchandise store, the old Rogers trading post and first post office on the Rogers' land, about two miles north of the present Skiatook. The old home is still there; it burned down at one time but has been rebuilt. His widow, Mrs. Nan Rogers, is living in the town of Skiatook and his three children Lucile, Clifford and Sequoyah, live in the vicinity of Skiatook. I was very glad to serve him as secretary during the years 1902-17.

After the Civil War, my father, Alex Lewis, Texas Ranger, reduced from plenty to poverty by the War, returned to Indian Territory in 1887, to Coal Creek Switch, now called Dawson. A post office was established and my father was the first postmaster.
I went to the district Cherokee day school until I was about seventeen, then to Hillside Mission, north of Skiatook during 1892, '93 and '94 and was admitted to the practice of law by the United States Interior Department in 1902.

I was married to Elizabeth Schrimsher, daughter of Judge John Gunter Schrimsher, who was a captain under Stand Watie during the Civil War. At the close of the War he settled on Dog Creek in Cooweescoowee District and became successively from 1877 to 1893; sheriff, senator, district judge, and Washington delegate. He was first collector of Taxes on the Cherokee Outlet, appointed by Chief Bushyhead.

Battles of Chusto and Talasah (Caving Banks)

There has been some confusion about the two battles fought in the vicinity of "Tulsey Town" during the Civil War. My account of these two battles comes directly from people who took part in them. Captain Charles Leflore and Pleasant Porter took part in the battle of Caving Banks and the Battle of Hominy Creek was fought on the farm of my wife's father, Judge John Gunter Schrimsher.

The exact date of the battle of Caving Banks has not
been established as far as I know but it was probably in November, 1861. As you know this goes back to the feud between the Upper and Lower Creeks caused from the part Opothle Yahola, leader of the Upper Creeks, had played in the death of William McIntosh, leader of the Lower Creeks. The Upper Creeks, under Opothle Yahola, moved westward away from the secessionist center of activities and entered into negotiations with Washington, becoming Loyalists.

While the Federal Government was re-organizing its Western Military territory and preparing to officially recognize the Loyal Indian troops - Opothle Yahola and his men camped near the junction of the Deep and North Forks of the Canadian River. Douglas Cooper, Confederate, resolved to attack Opothle Yahola there but he broke up camp and started for Kansas sometime in November, 1861, seeking succor or refuge. Opothle Yahola’s forces consisted of about fifteen hundred Creeks, some Seminoles and two or three hundred negroes, but he was hampered in traveling by the presence of women, children, sick and aged.

When Cooper reached Opothle Yahola’s camp he found it deserted - Indian fashion he had folded up quietly and de-
parted. Cooper trailed him toward the Arkansas River and toward the last of the month, November, Cooper met Opothle Yahola's forces at the indecisive battle of Round Mountain. After dark Opothle Yahola slipped into the Cherokee country where some of the full-bloods gave him encouragement and help. Cooper was ordered to be in readiness to aid McCulloch should the Federals advance toward Springfield, so he had no opportunity to follow up the slight advantage at Round Mountain until he was ordered later to set out for "Tulsey Town".

The Battle of Caving Banks seems to have been a preliminary of the later Battle of Hominy Creek. The chief result was the deflection of full-bloods under Colonel Drew. Roaming bands of Loyal Creek Indians had assembled along a natural fortification on Bird Creek, near the mouth of Delaware Creek, about eight miles north of present Tulsa. This land is at present the W. P. Philips farm, known as the Lula Belle Philips allotment and there is a marker there commemorating the battle.

Colonel John Drew and a detachment of his regiment of Cherokee full-bloods, about fifteen hundred, who were posted on the Verdigris and were ordered to join Cooper and be on
the lookout for Opothle Yahola, met the Loyalist forces at
above mentioned point on Bird Creek. This bend forms a
horse shoe about four hundred yards long and the banks on
the Union side (North) were about thirty feet high and
caved in, hence the name Caving Banks. The Unionists were
also protected by timber and cane but Drew and Cooper,
on the south bank in prairie country were at a disadvantage.
Choctaws under Douglas Cooper participated with Drew. The
battle was short and furious with no heavy loss to either
side and at night fall it ended, with neither side winning.
The point of interest was the deflection of Drew's full-
bloods, who withdrew to the side of the enemy - Loyal Creek
Indians. Drew withdrew to the Grand River and reported dis-
loyalty of his men to Colonel Stand Watie, who is said to
have remarked, "Leave them alone, I'll eat dinner with them
on Christmas Day."

John Ross, the aged Cherokee Chief, told his people
on December 19, that the treaty signed on October 7, 1861
was the best one they had ever been offered and concluded
his speech by saying: "According to the stipulation of the
treaty we must meet enemies of our allies whenever the
South requires it, as they are our enemies as well as the
enemies of the South; and I feel sure that no such occur-
rence as the one we deplore, the battle of Chusto-Talasah,
would have taken place if all things were understood as I
have endeavored to explain them. Indeed the true meaning
of our treaty is that we must know no line in the presence
of our invaders, be he who he may."

Battle of Hominy Creek

By wife's parents, Judge John Gunter Schrimsher and
Juliette Candy Schrimsher, western white Cherokee (quarter-
bloods) had a ranch at Hominy Falls, eighteen miles north-
west of what is now Tulsa, where the Battle of Hominy Creek
was fought, December 26, 1861. I have heard both Judge
and Mrs. Schrimsher tell about their personal experiences
in the battle and have also heard Sam Candy, Mrs. Schrimsher's
nephew, who took part in it.

The Schrimshers lived at Hominy Falls and the Candy
family lived north on Candy Creek. Bob Parks, District
Judge, lived between the present Avant and Skiatook, where
Candy Creek runs into Bird Creek. Here was the two-story
log court house, with jail above and court below. In the same neighborhood lived the Tyners, the Melton brothers, white Cherokees, who were slave holders, Emigrants and Old Settlers. They organized one of the first companies for the Confederacy with Bob Parks as Captain and in December, 1861, this troop had moved to Grand River to join Confederates there. The women and slaves were left behind.

Subsequent to the organization of this company, Opothle Yahola had moved his forces in from the indecisive battle that had been fought with Cooper’s men at Round Mountain. Opothle’s followers, possibly fifteen hundred men, women, children and run away ‘niggers’ had established their headquarters at Hominy Falls, right across from the Schrimsher house. They had cattle, horses, wagons, in fact, their winter supplies.

Mrs. Schrimsher, then a young woman and her sister were alone except for two slaves; Judge Schrimsher and all the other leading men in the neighborhood being with Captain Bob Park’s troop, who were posted on Grand River awaiting orders.

As night came on the two women who were alone in the log house heard the Indian war whoops and fires revealed war-painted Indians. Mrs. Schrimsher and her sister became
frightened and shut themselves up as tightly as possible in the two rooms, expecting momentary death for they were southern sympathizers and Opothle Yahola's forces were northern allies. Even their slaves deserted them for they heard them talking with the enemy during the night. However, the next morning the slaves returned to receive orders some feeling of loyalty seemed to remain. Mrs. Schrimsher told them to get their horses and she and her sister bundled up as many belongings as possible and went to join relatives in what is now Wagoner County.

An interesting thing to me was her description of "Tulsey Town", 1861, as it was when she rode through it on her way South. She said there was only one house there at that time, the home of a Cherokee Indian woman named Cabin Smith. As nearly as she could locate it years later it would be about where Tulsa Ice Company is today, at Fourth and Detroit Streets. There was a spring there and she said it was possible there were Indians living along the Arkansas banks but there was no way of making definite locations, for the only markers in those days were iron posts every six miles to indicate the boundary line between the Cherokee and Creek Nations.
A few weeks later the Battle of Hominy Creek was fought December 26, 1861. There is some controversy about that date, but those with whom I talked had occasion to remember it as the day after Christmas. Opothle Yahola's forces were entrenched at Hominy Falls, so Stand Watie from Grand River ordered McIntosh from the south to join him to attack Opothle Yahola and they joined forces near what is Sperry today, about six miles southeast of Hominy Falls, Opothle Yahola's location.

Watie and McIntosh had about fifteen hundred men and on the morning of the 26th as they approached Yahola's forces, Watie sent out as an advance guard for scouting purposes, Captain Clem V. Rogers, father of Will Rogers, John Schrimsher, Sam Caudy and three other men. They went to the Schrimsher house on Hominy Falls; Opothle Yahola's forces were about two hundred yards northwest, and there sitting idly on a fence near the cowpen of the Schrimsher house were a Pin Indian and two or three Creek Indians. As the scouts approached, one of the Indians called out, "See the Confederates coming—now we'll get some good overcoats." But only one Indian lived to tell the tale for the scouts...
started firing and the Confederate forces closed in. The battle started at 10 o'clock in the morning and lasted about three hours.

The Union forces had an advantage for there was heavy timber on the north side of the creek, also a high bank there. Yahola's forces had also thrown up a log fortification. There were about two hundred killed all told, very few of whom were Confederates. Even women and children were killed, unfortunately. Retreating forces of Opothle Yahola were followed and many more were killed for he had to move very slowly, being hampered by having women, children, the aged and sick with him. He was taking all of his followers to Kansas where the "Great White Father would give them plenty of food and clothing.

W. C. Rogers told me that he had often gone to the battle ground and had made quite a collection of old wagon tires, iron kettles and other relics. Mrs. Lew Appleby came into possession of the ranch at Hominy Falls in 1872 and when I was about fourteen I visited her there. I tried to find out the exact location of the old battle field, but twenty years had wiped out possible landmarks.