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July 22, 1937

Interview with Charles LeFave  
Irish and French descent

My father, S. R. LeFave, was French. He was born in 1836 in Little Rock, Arkansas. He died at Booneville, Arkansas, in the year of 1881, and is buried in the Booneville Cemetery in Logan County.

My mother, Nancy LeFave, was Dutch and Irish. She was born in 1851 at Stone Hill, Arkansas. She died the year of 1898, seven miles north of Stigler, Oklahoma, and is buried in the Webbers Falls Cemetery at Webbers Falls, Oklahoma.

I was born in Sebastian County, Arkansas, in 1871, near Booneville. Came to the Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation, and settled two miles east of Whitefield. Came in covered wagons, driving ox teams, bringing my mother with me.

The first and only school that I attended was near Washburn, Arkansas. Like all other schools in those days, it was a subscription school, where each pupil had to pay one dollar each month to attend. We averaged six months school a year. We had a very small log cabin to use for the school house and the seats were made out of logs also. I went through the eighth grade as that is as far as they taught.

When I was twenty-five years old I came to the Indian Territory, first renting a farm from Phil Holmes, and farming this for three years. I then rented some land from Josh Lucas, Choctaw Indian. This place was located seven miles north of Stigler, on the Canadian River. Here I farmed cotton and corn, and raised lots of stock.

I was married to Miss Alice Hill of Dutch and Irish descent, who was born in 1861 at Monroe, Oklahoma, in LeFlore County. We were married at her small farm home by a Free Will Baptist Minister. There was rather a large crowd attended the wedding which took place March 23, 1902. After the vows had been read, there was a big supper served to all who attended.

The next day I took my wife in a wagon to Spiro, Oklahoma. Here we bought our household goods from Redwine and Dunklin Brothers, who are still in business in the same old place.

When I first came to Stigler there was but very little here. Just a few log cabins and most of the land was in cotton and corn. We received our mail from Newman Post office where Sim Stigler served as Postmaster. A few years later Sam Rose put in a bank in a tent, and

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was living <sup>there</sup> when the Indian government had all the land surveyed.

I helped build the school house that stands where the Mudlark School stands today. We, the people of that community, went out and cut logs and hauled them to build an eighteen by twenty foot log house. Like most all schools those days we had a subscription school. There were two other fellows and I who went to Red Oak, across the mountain, and got lumber to build the seats and desks for the school. This building stood there several years after Statehood, until bonds were voted to build new schools. I also helped build the school that stands at Mudlark today.

While I was living in the bottoms we raised lots of cattle and we started to ship them. We would have to ford the river with them as this was the only way of getting them to Checotah which was the shipping point.

We also used ferries to get across the river. There were several of them all up and down the river. During those days we did most of our trading in Fort Smith, Arkansas. We would take wagons and buy enough supplies to do for months at a time. Three or four men would each take their wagon and all go together and camp along the way. It took them almost a week to make the trip.

I have attended the big Indian meetings which lasted for weeks. At these meetings, the Indians when they got ready to take the white folks to eat, only took one at a time. Sometimes it took them all day to get the white people fed.

I have gone to Indian cries, ball games and had lots of dealings with them and found them very easy to get along with.

The year of 1922 I served as a deputy sheriff under Jim Keese, in Haskell County.

Mrs. LeFave and I both both belong to the Free Will Baptist Church of Stigler, Oklahoma.

We moved to the town of Stigler the year of 1912, staying here for fourteen years, moving back to the farm in 1928, one-half mile north and one-half mile east of the Perry school house, six miles north of Stigler, Oklahoma. We have six children living at this time, two girls and four boys.