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Jas. S. Buchanan,
Investigator,
January 12, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Roy Toombs,
Muskogee, Oklahoma.
200 Edmond Street.

I was born March 31, 1880, in Clay County, Arkansas. My father was G. J. Toombs, Irish descent, and my mother was Margaret Smith Toombs, Cherokee descent.

In 1881 my parents moved to the Cherokee Nation, settling near Fort Gibson where they lived about four years, then moved to Bowie, Texas, where they remained until 1892, then the family returned to the Indian Territory, stopping at Muskogee. For two years in Muskogee we made our home in the house known as the old Garrett place, a seven room frame house that stood on the present site of the Y.M.C.A. building on Main Street. At that time W. A. Madden owned a planing mill and paint shop just north of the Garrett place. Madden was a general contractor in Muskogee at that time. Across the road west of Madden's mill was the home of Dave Adams who was United States deputy marshal. Other deputy United

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States marshals at that time were Landrof Dobsin, John Brown, Elmer Menue, Bass Reeves who was a negro, Semp Bennett, Bud Kell and John West. The principal business institutions in Muskogee at that time were the Turner Hardware Company on the northeast corner of Main and Broadway. Berry's Drug Store, Captain Severs Mercantile Store which stood where the Huber hotel now stands; Sam Severs, the son of Captain Severs, saddle shop on Main Street just south of Captain Severs Store, Ratterson's Mercantile Store, John Cobb's drug store, a frame building on Main Street between Okmulgee and Broadway, J. L. Turner Mercantile Store which stood just south of Cobb's drug store on Main Street, and L. R. Mulison's Drug Store and Bottling Works situated on the west side of Main Street between Okmulgee and Broadway in a two-story brick building, one of the first brick buildings erected in Muskogee and is yet standing in its original state. Tom McDaniel and Al. Stevens ran a butcher shop on the northwest corner of Okmulgee and Main Streets in a two-story frame building. On the northeast corner across from McDaniel & Stevens Butcher Shop, Billie Brewer ran a saddle and harness

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shop. The Blue front Livery stable stood on the east side of Main Street south of Bevers store; it was owned by a man by the name of Lacey. Just south of the Blue front Livery stable was the Lillard Livery stable and next south on the east side of Main Street was the Martha Robb Hospital, then next was the McDaniel hotel. On the west side of main Street about two hundred feet west of where the Convention Hall stands was the home place and blacksmith shop of George Zufall. Otto Zufall

ran a blacksmith shop on the southwest corner of Cherokee and Broadway. The oldest blacksmith shop in Muskogee at that time was located on Cherokee Street just north of the east end of the Katy viaduct, owned and operated by a man by the name of Fred Buell. Frank Swift was the first ice dealer in Muskogee. As there was no ice plant in Muskogee, his ice was shipped in and his ice house was located back of John Cobb's drug store. The first tin shop in Muskogee was owned by an old man by the name of Yates and was located on the corner of 3rd and Broadway. South of Yates' tin shop was a stove shop ran by a negro by the name of Caesar who was a real mechanic, as he built

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ranges complete there in his little shop by hand. The Kendall College when it was first established stood on the south side of Okmulgee where the City Hall and Harbour's Building now stands. Bondheimer's hide house stood on the southeast corner of 2nd and Okmulgee, later that old building was moved farther south on 2nd Street approximately 150 feet, later torn down for erection of more modern buildings. At that time the Indian Agency was situated in a frame building that stood on the northwest corner of 4th and Broadway where Montgomery Ward's Store now stands and Colonel Wisdom was the Indian agent. In 1894 a great portion of the business district of Muskogee was destroyed by fire, also the old Garrett home in which we were living at the time. We then moved to Fort Gibson where my father engaged in the building contracting business.

At that time Fort Gibson consisted mostly of old government barrack buildings, the majority of them being log structures situated in the valley near the river, which is now called old town. All that was on the present site of Fort Gibson at that time was the Missouri Pacific Depot.

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which stood on the west side of the track and about 100 feet south of the present station, and a store that stood across the track from depot. The store belonged to F. H. Nash. The old Jeff Davis home was the largest of the old log buildings. It was a story and a half high, two large rooms on the first floor and three on the second floor, a basement under the south end of the house and a stone fireplace at each end of the building. Southwest of the Jeff Davis home a short distance stood the Zachariah Taylor home, then owned by and was the home of Judge Henry Meigs. The original log building was afterwards torn down and the present building erected in its place by Judge Meigs. The next building west of Judge Meigs' home was the home of John Scott who ran a store which stood on the lot adjoining his home. An old government commissary building which was a frame structure stood on the opposite side of the Missouri Pacific track west of John Scott's place in which Will Nash ran a store. Will Nash's home stood just north of the old commissary building. There was another old dwelling just north of Will Nash's home

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in which an old man by the name of Hass ran a shoe shop and was the only shoemaker in Fort Gibson for years.

The next and last house north on the west side of the railroad and nearest the steamboat landing was known as the Lype place. East of the railroad, north of the stockade near the river was the home of Chief Bushyhead.

East of the present stockade stood the old Government post chapel which was used as a Presbyterian Church and in which I attended Sunday School. The next house south of the old Chapel was a double log house with a hall through the center, two shedrooms on the back and a porch along the front from the entire length of the house and a fireplace at each end of the house. This house was our home for quite awhile after moving to Fort Gibson. It was a duplicate of the majority of the log buildings of old Fort Gibson built by the government in the early days. In 1894 I went to work for the Rogers brothers on what was known as the Connell Rogers farm. John Crittenden and I took care of a stable of race horses that were owned and handled by the Rogers brothers. The old horse barn is yet

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standing on the Connell Rogers place on the east side of the Arkansas River, north of the Muskogee- Fort Gibson bridge. Paul Rogers was also engaged in the cattle business and I worked for him looking after his herds.

In 1895 when the Cherokee payment was made at Tahlequah it seemed as though all the crooks and gamblers in the country assembled there and the general situation became serious. I was in Tahlequah on one occasion and was coming back to Fort Gibson on the stage that ran between Fort Gibson and Tahlequah when a half breed Cherokee by the name of Frank Sanders who had filled up on bootleg whisky came out on the road about two miles west of Tahlequah near where the Cherokee Male Seminary then stood, and proceeded to hold up everything that came along. His first attempt was made on Milo Willie who was on his way to Tahlequah on horseback. Willie decided he would not submit to a holdup, so he shot it out with Sanders and as soon as Willie returned Sanders' fire, Sanders took to the brush and permitted Willie to go his

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way. Yet determined on his singlehanded outlaw expedition, his next attempt was to hold up the Fort Gibson-Tahlequah stage which was being driven by Bill Newsom, a white man. The passengers aboard were Will Kenney and Alf Collier of Fort Worth, Texas, another man whose name I can't remember, and myself. When Sanders held us up he came into the road shouting for the driver to stop and the same time shooting into the stage. Newsom, the driver, jumped from his seat and disappeared in the brush. One of Sanders' wild shots had struck Kenney in the shoulder, inflicting a serious wound. Alf Collier, Kenney's partner, also made his escape into the brush when Sanders made his appearance. Sanders searched Kenney, the other passenger and myself, securing only a small amount of pocket change from the three of us and after much abuse and threats, he rode off down the road in disgust, of course not knowing that Collier, Kenney's partner, who leaped from the stage and disappeared in the brush unnoticed by Sanders, had carried with him a money sack containing several thousand dollars with which he later safely arrived in Fort Gibson.

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After Sanders left the scene we experienced quite a bit of trouble locating and coaxing Bill Newsom, the driver, out of the brush to drive his team on to Fort Gibson where Kenney could be given medical attention. On our arrival at Fort Gibson Kenney was taken to Mollie Trent's Hotel where he remained until his recovery was sufficient for him to travel. After Sanders left us, he went down the road a short distance towards Tahlequah, there meeting his next intended victim, Felix Duncan, and his mother, on their way home from Tahlequah in a two-horse wagon. Sanders shot at Duncan. Missing Duncan the bullet struck Duncan's mother, killing her instantly. Duncan then shot Sanders, killing both Sanders and his horse. Felix Duncan was not wounded. Realizing his mother was dead, he turned his team around and brought his mother back to Tahlequah where she was properly prepared for burial. Instead of the authorities arresting Felix for the killing, they made up a bonus of \$200.00 and presented it to Felix Duncan for the good turn he did in the general interest of the community.

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Richard Walker, always known as Dick Walker, owned a drug store which stood just west of Martin's tomb in old Fort Gibson. The post office at that time was in Walker's Drug Store and Dick Walker was the postmaster. A negro by the name of Frank Hudson carried the mail from the railroad station to old town for several years.

In 1894 Hubbard Ross (now caretaker at the new stockade) was a clerk in the store of F. H. Nash, which was the only store in the new town at that time, and one quiet summer afternoon some of the Cook gang gave them a surprise call and held up the place, taking all the money Nash had on hand in the store as well as the loose change they found on the parties who were in the store, also Hubbard Ross' watch. When the purpose of their mission was completed they rode out of town.

Jim French

Jim French was reared at Fort Gibson, the son of Tom French. There were three children in the family, Tom, Jim and a sister by the name of Dora. Jim was the only one of the family who was of a wayward disposition. The first trouble Jim French became involved in, was when

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he was involved in the killing of John Poorboy, a Cherokee Indian, who was city marshal at Fort Gibson at that time. Dave Andrews, Jim Buchanan and Jim French were all implicated in that killing. Though Jim Buchanan really did the killing, he escaped and was never captured, but returned to Fort Gibson after statehood and married a Fort Gibson girl by the name of Bessie Walker, the daughter of Dick Walker. In later years he moved to Coffeyville, Kansas, where he died. Jim French was not captured and tried for that killing, though Dave Andrews was tried and received the death sentence but died in jail before he was executed. After the killing of John Poorboy, Jim French remained on the scout, committing one depredation after another until he was killed in an attempted holdup of Ivory's mercantile store at Catoosa in the winter of 1895. French and a man by the name of Cochran went into Catoosa to hold up the store and found the proprietor expecting and prepared for them and a gun battle followed, resulting in the killing of Cochran and Ivory and the wounding of Jim French. French fled from the place and stopped at a farm house about three

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miles from Catoosa and compelled the farmer to secure medical aid for him. Instead of the farmer taking his own horse, he took French's horse and went to Catoosa and with a posse returned to his home where French was lying on a mattress which he had placed near the front door of the house. A man in the posse by the name of Wilkins crept up to the house and shot French in the back of the head with a shotgun, killing him instantly. French, in his death agony rolled over and shoved one of his feet into the fire in the fireplace and almost burned his foot off before any of the posse had the nerve to go into the house where he was. Jim French was about twenty-eight years of age when he was killed.

During the time the Indian Territory was under the jurisdiction of the Federal court at Fort Smith and any officer or citizen captured or killed an outlaw for which there was a standing reward, the prisoner or body had to be presented in the court at Fort Smith and legally identified before the reward could be claimed. Therefore, Wilkins and other members of the posse took the body of Jim French to Fort Smith and Jim's brother, Tom French, also went along

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and after identifying his brother, he was given custody of the body with which he returned to Fort Gibson and buried in the Fort Gibson cemetery.

Sam McWilliams

Sam McWilliams, known as the "Verdigris Kid", for awhile was an associate of the Cook gang and was one of the most desperate young outlaws in the Territory at that time. He cherished an ambition to be a gang leader himself, and in 1896 he, Frog Davis and their associates held up a Missouri Pacific passenger train at what was then known as Corretta, now Okay. At that time it was it was only a side track located about one-half mile north of the present station of Okay. McWilliams and his gang threw the switch at Corretta and headed the passenger train into the siding and robbed all the passengers. The only passenger injured during the holdup was a United States marshal by the name of Bales who was a passenger on the train and was shot in the jaw when the train came to a stop and the gang was shooting at random into the coach windows.

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Later McWilliams and his gang attempted a holdup of the town of Braggs which proved to be his finish. Through some manner the people of Braggs became informed and were prepared for their reception, which resulted in a serious gun battle and the killing of Sam McWilliams, George Butler and a man by the name of Sanders, members of the gang and a young man whose name I have forgotten, but he was the son of station agent at Braggs at that time.

Frog Davis

Frog Davis was a half-breed Cherokee, small in stature, quiet and mild-mannered but a dangerous man. He was convicted for the murder of a man near Tahlequah and was executed at Tahlequah in 1896. I knew Frog Davis and attended his execution. I went to the jail with Albert Taylor and Ellis Rattlingourd, the officers, when they went to take him to the scaffold to be hung. We asked him if he wanted a minister before he went to the gallows, and Frog said he had made peace with the Lord. We proceeded with him to the place of execution and when he was upon the scaffold an officer asked him if he had anything to say, he broke into a resentful mood and said, "I am the bravest

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little Indian that ever had a rope around his neck or went to Hell. I killed the man you are hanging me for and I would have killed the other one if he hadn't run behind a tree. I would have been worse than Cherokee Bill or any of his kind if you hadn't got me when you did." As he finished these words, Zeke Paris, an officer pulled the black cap down over his head and he said no more. The father of Frog Davis was standing near the scaffold looking on, and about the time Frog stopped talking, his father yelled out in a loud voice, "That's a man, tell it to 'em boy." Then Albert Taylor dropped the trap that ended the career of Frog Davis. He was about twenty-one years of age at the time of his execution.

In 1894 I was married to Lizzie Williams, Cherokee, the daughter of Lewis C. and Liza Cordrey of Tahlequah. Three children were born to us, one son and two daughters, one daughter now living. My wife died in 1908.

In 1911 I was married to Anna Neal, Cherokee. Her parents died when she was very young and she was reared by her aunt who was the wife of Isaac Walkingstick of Stilwell, Oklahoma.

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Isaac Walkingstick was a United States deputy marshal and a member of the Indian police in Going-snake District in 1895, during which time the Cherokee court was in session and the Cherokees were holding a three day picnic at the Peavine courthouse near Barren Fork about five miles north and a little east of Stilwell. John Cortassel was drinking and became involved in a difficulty with another Indian by the name of Dick Farrell. Serious trouble between them was prevented by friends of both men, but Cortassel being under the influence of whisky, he continued to be boisterous and began shooting at random about the crowd. After giving vent to his feelings by firing several shots mingled with a few wild Indian warwhoops, he went into his store that he was operating at that place at the time and began raising a disturbance. Isaac Walkingstick, who was a good friend of Cortassel's, started into the store intending to quiet Cortassel down and prevent any further trouble. When Isaac Walkingstick entered the store door, Cortassel saw him and mistook him for Dick Farrel, pulled

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his gun and shot Walkingstick. Walkingstick in turn fired at Corntassel, shooting away the whole top of his head. Both men died in their tracks. Two good friends killed by each other through a mistake of one under the influence of whisky.