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Interviewer, Johnson H. Hampton
September 15, 1937.

Interview with Harvey William,
Finley, Oklahoma.

Born 1894; State of Louisiana.
Full blood Indian.

Parents Tom William, Louisiana.
Mary William, Louisiana.

I was born in Louisiana in 1894. I was quite small when my father moved to this country from Louisiana.

My father's name was Tom William and my mother's name was Mary William. I don't know whether they were raised in Louisiana or not or whether they moved from Mississippi. They never told me how they came to be in Louisiana, but I always thought that when the Choctaws moved from Mississippi my grandfather did not move here but went to Louisiana instead for my grandfather and grandmother died in that state and were buried there.

As I said I was quite small when my father and mother moved to the Choctaw Nation. I have been told that we had some kinsfolks who were already in this country. Our kinsfolks moved in there after the Choctaws did; they came over

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several years after the move and located near what is now Idabel. They wrote to my father to move to this country, so my father did and we came over on the train from Louisiana to Arcada, Arkansas, where some of our kinfolks met us with a wagon and brought us to here they lived near Idabel, about seven miles east of that place.

At that time, there was no town in that country, in fact, there were no stores in that part of the country that I know of at that time.

I do not think that my father was in the Civil War for those who were living in that state did not get into the war like the Choctaws did in this country. I do not think that my grandfather fought in the Civil War.

I have been told that when the Dawes Commission came down to enroll the Choctaws, we had a hard time getting on the rolls. It seems that the Choctaw Council had to pass special laws for us who came from Louisiana for there were a good many of us who came from there who were not on the rolls so when the special laws were passed authorizing the Dawes Commission to put us on the rolls, no one could

deny that we were Choctaws so they put us on the Choctaw roll and we got our allotment of land just the same as the other Choctaws.

When we reached this country, we had to rent land for several years before we tried to locate our own land for we thought that we were not entitled to any land but through some of our friends we finally located some land for our own and lived on it and farmed it just like the other Choctaws. But one thing I do know is that the Choctaw of this country was not as much of a worker as my father was for he had to work back in Louisiana, so when he got located out here he went to work and put some land in large cultivation. He had a pretty farm in cultivation; he must have had about twenty acres in cultivation which was much more than the other Choctaws had. They did not have but about five or ten acres of land in cultivation; just enough to raise corn for their bread.

When we moved here this country was full of wild game so the Choctaws did not have to work very much to eat. All they had to do was to raise enough corn to make bread. They had all the wild game in the woods they wanted to eat.

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There were lots of fish in the creeks so they just fished and hunted most of the time and did not work as they should. I guess they figured that they did not have to work for their living.

When we first located in that part of the country there were no white people there, only a few who would stay there for a few days and then leave. I think that they were outlaws mostly run out of other states to keep from being captured as law breakers.

We raised plenty of corn and some cotton. My father was used to raising cotton back in Louisiana, so he would raise some cotton when he came over here. It was a long way to the gins as he had to take his cotton to Clarksville to have it ginned and sold. We did most of our trading at Clarksville then for there were no stores to trade at in that part of the country at that time. We traded corn for hogs and yearlings ^{and} for other things that we needed on the farm.

My mother was a basket maker; she would make up baskets, some small ones and some large ones and sell them; she would sell the small ones for twenty-five cents apiece

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and the large ones for a dollar apiece and she would take some baskets into Texas where she sold them to white people. She would dye these baskets some way with herbs and roots, and herbs. I do not know what these roots/were but the dye would make these baskets look spotted and striped all over. They looked as if they had grown that way. Mother had no spinning wheel. I saw two spinning wheels but I not not know how they were run.

e lived in a log house chinked and daubed with mud; that was the best that we could do at that time. e did not have any floor in the house only dirt floor, but after a while we got some lumber and built a plank house with a plank floor. All of the Choctaws in our community lived in log houses; some of these houses had split log floors while some of them had only dirt floors.

hile we were living there a railroad company put a railroad through that country; I think that it was about 1903. This railroad opened up that country and several sawmills were put up and people began to saw the big pine timber that was in that country and the white oaks as well. There was some cypress timber there at that time but I

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I think the cypress trees are all gone now. That country was a wild country at that time but now there are lots of big farms opened up in that country. This is in what is now known as McCurtain County.

I never saw a war dance but I have been told that they used to have those war dances during the war. I do not think that the Choctaws dance at all now, at least I have not seen any Choctaw dancing in the last twenty-five years.

I am not very well acquainted with what the Choctaws did before we moved here so I am not able to tell much of anything that happened before I came to this country. I don't know how the Choctaws lived nor what they ate at that time, but I have heard some say that they used to dig up roots and eat them.

I went to school but very little so I am able to speak but little English and I cannot write in English, but I can read and write in my own language pretty well. I can read and write in our language just about as well as any other Choctaw around here can.

I have attended lots of Indian camp meetings and a good many of their "cries." In fact, I used to camp at

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one of our churches. At this time it is a Methodist Church. This church has been built for a long time.

They tell me that an Indian by the name of Jackson built it out of logs and named it Old Cedar Church and it still bears that name but the log building has been removed and a plank house has been built in its place. This plank building is still on the same ground where it was built several years ago, and I understand that several men were killed at this church in the days gone by.

My grandfather and my grandmother died and are buried in Louisiana. My father and mother died and are buried in this country. We were known as Louisiana Choctaws but we are on the rolls simply as Choctaws. I have lived among them ever since we moved here and I guess I will live here until I die. I expect to be buried here.