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May 10, 37.

JAMES MIDDLETON, Informant,
Briartown, Oklahoma.

-Jas. S. Buchanan

I was born in 1857 in Tishomingo county, Mississippi. I came to the Indian Territory in 1885 and settled in Younger Bend community on Canadian river about four miles west of where the town of Briartown is now located. The country was very sparsely settled in those days. The old Tom Starr place was the most prominent settlement in this vicinity at that time, and there were only three settlers between Younger Bend and Muskogee, They were, Sam Davis' place which was about four miles northwest of the present site of Porum, Johnson Foreman, who lived about 9 miles north of Porum and Tom Monroe, his place being located about one mile west of the present site of Warner. Other than those three places the entire country was all open range and the cattle business was very profitable. As to farming, our principal crop was corn and we always disposed of our surplus farm products to the cattlemen.

GAME

There were lots of game in this country when I first came here. I have seen as many as a hundred

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wild turkey in one bunch. We would generally hunt them at night, watch for their roosts and shoot them by the moon light, but would never kill more than we needed. There were also plenty of deer, I have seen as many as twenty or more in a herd but we would never kill but one at a time and divide it up with the neighbors and in that way we would always have fresh venison. Prairie chicken were too numerous to tell about for if I should tell of how they at that time abounded in this country people that never saw this country in those days would not believe my story.

The first killing I remember in this vicinity after I came here was the killing of John Sweeden, who had settled where the town of Stigler is now located. He settled there about 1883 and resided there until 1886 when he was killed by a man by the name of Willard at his home, which stood about where the center of the town is today. Sim Stigler afterwards came in possession of the Sweeden claim and retained the property until the town of Stigler was established.

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I became acquainted with Sam Starr and his wife, Belle Starr, when I first came to the Indian Territory as I rented a place from them the first year I was here and all our business transactions were always satisfactory, and during my four years acquaintance with them, until she was killed in 1889 I never saw anything in her life that caused me to think she was a bad woman.