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Interview with Arthur J. Cline  
By Lula Austin, Field Worker.....

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Arthur J. Cline was born at Boggy Depot Choctaw Nation, March 23, 1865, but when he was about six months<sup>old</sup>, he moved with his parents to Fort Smith, Arkansas, remaining there nine years. The family came back to Indian Territory traveling in a covered wagon over the old state line route, landed at Stringtown in 1875. While living at Boggy Depot, William Tillman Cline, who had been a soldier in the Southern Army and had been wounded, had charge of the supplies for the Confederate Army from 1862 to 1865.

Captain G. B. Hester was the main merchant of Boggy Depot.

The Indians did most of their trading, bartering. They would come riding horseback in single file to town and bring snake root, beeswax, honey, tobacco, berries and corn, exchanging them for merchandise, and in the Fall, they would bring hogs. If, when trading, they owed a little balance, they would promise

to come back a certain day to pay and they were sure to be there, as their word was good. Mr. Cline says: "One day after I had grown to manhood, and was clerking in a store at Atoka, a young Indian who liked to drink and went heavily for lemon extract, came in and asked to buy a bottle of extract. I sold it to him, and in a little while, he was back for more. I told him I had just sold him a bottle." He said: "Oh! John I need two more, my wife want to make big big cake."

In 1885 the country was full of peddlars, selling lightning rods, clocks, and wrought iron stoves. The clocks sold for \$25.00, the stoves for \$100.00 and they charged \$20.00 to \$25.00 to put lightning rods on your house. A cedar bucket for water and gourd dipper was always found on the back porch.

The principal things the Indian men would buy for themselves was oil, calico, material for hunting jackets, hair oil (bear oil brand), feathers for hats, and red paint (vermillion).

When a boy, my clothes were home made, of water proof material and usually trimmed in brass buttons.

My education was obtained in the Neighborhood schools and one year at Cane Hill College, in Arkansas. I worked three months on the Capitol at Tuskahoma while it was under construction.

The old post oak tree that was used as a whipping post still stands near where the old District Court House stood at the forks of Boggy. Dogwood switches were used to whip with; three would take turns whipping. They would strike up and down instead of across the back. I have seen them whipped, but would never go to see a man shot. There was always a crowd of spectators.

The dead were buried near their home, and some of the Indians would erect a shed over the grave. A short while after the burial they would have a funeral cry - inviting all the relations. They would go to the grave and kneel around and weep, and after the weeping was over

they would have a feast, then go home.

The Indians enjoyed camping and when the camp meetings were in progress they would all go.

The arbors, where such meetings were held, were always built near a spring.

The main dishes of the Indians were :  
Tofulla, pshofa, and shuck bread. A block and pestle were used to beat the corn and a sieve to separate the chaf from it. The pshofa was boiled with fresh hog meat. The wild game was stewed or fried. Bread was made of meal and beans. (Walopshi) cobbler was made with possum grapes.

There were a few old Choctaw Warriors near Stringtown, who still used the bow and arrow., but most of the Indians in the early seventies adopted the Winchesters, carrying them in scabbards attached to their saddle.

The old Indian ball game was a favorite game of mine. I still have my ball sticks which

are made of hickory about 3 feet long bent back into a small loop with skin woven across the loop. The game is very exciting. Two, or as many as wish, can play. Twenty two make a good game, eleven on each side. Poles are placed about 100 yards apart and the Medicine Man goes to the center of the ring and starts the game, tossing a small ball in the air. Eleven points wins the game. Each time you hit the end post is a point. The women cheer and pat the men on the back during the game, saying in Choctaw - (Hurry and get it). The ball is never touched by the hand, always hitting or catching with the ball sticks. The players wear only a breech-clout attached to the belt and at the back a tail attached to the belt which is made from a cow's tail. (I have one).

Mr. Cline has several old letters, one of which is dated December 27, 1859, from Campbell LeFlore to Col. T. M. McKinney from Carthage Miss, telling Col McKinney he is planning on moving to Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Mrs. Cline said when the Indians would come to Antlers for their annuity, they would stop at her sister's home. (Mrs. V. M. Locke, Sr.) There would be so many, they would have to use the barn as sleeping quarters and sometimes it would take 100 lbs of flour to make bread for one meal.

The picture men were always there to get some of the money that was paid to the Indians. I peeped in one Indian's grip and he had it full of tin-type pictures made in many different poses. Some of the Indians would go to Paris, Texas, to spend their money.

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