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Chey O. Moore, Supervisor
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Frank J. Still
Worker

Interview: Clark L. Collins

Clark L. Collins, who lives at 115 W. Morgan St., Tahlequah, Oklahoma, was born October 9th, 1866, 15 miles south of Atlanta, Ga. He is a Cherokee Indian.

Father - Ira Jackson Collins, Mother - Mary P. Collins

They came to this country in 1875 in a wagon, from Texas. They originally came from Georgia. They came on a train to New Orleans and then by boat on the Gulf of Mexico to Texas. They came in a two-horse wagon to Oklahoma, or Indian Territory.

OLD LETTER - EARLY DAYS

We settled 6 miles from Ft. Gibson on Grand River, just south of the Whiskey Ford and farmed. We traded at Ft. Gibson, also at Gibson Station. The soldiers were stationed at Ft. Gibson. I have seen them drill. We could hear the old cannon roar every evening just at sundown. We could still hear it after we moved to the Illinois River in the fall of 1882.

My father served all during the Civil War and never got wounded.

I have a letter that my Great Uncle wrote to Georgia in the year 1844. It was mailed at Evansville, Arkansas. It was addressed to his Uncle William Harris at Warsaw, Foraythe County, Georgia. John Collins was at Ft. Gibson when he wrote the letter. It is headed, Cherokee Nation, Arkansas, November 10, 1844. When he ended his letter he said, address me at Evansville, Arkansas, Washington County, Arkansas.

John B. Collins is buried in the National Cemetery, Ft. Gibson, I. T.

When my father and mother came from Georgia they went by way of Sweet Water, Texas to see my uncle Jesse Johnson who had come to Texas in 1870.

her on her birthday. My uncle was 80 years old that day. We invited a lot of old friends to eat dinner with mother and Uncle that day. Among them were Uncle Sam Condy. My uncle and Sam Conday served in the Civil War together. They had a time discussing the Civil War.

In the year 1887, Mr. Collins stayed all night at the old David Thompson home near Evansville, Arkansas, as is told about in the narrative of John F. Thompson of Tahlequah.

We stayed with a preacher who lived at the home. This preacher ran a water mill. He brought us all in the house and had prayer. This was something new to me as I never saw any one do that altho I had heard my mother pray. We did not have any churches except full blood and I could not understand the language.

At the time we lived at Ft. Gibson, Muskogee only had three stores in box houses. The Post Office was in a shack, 14 x 14. Mr. Jesse Johnson's son, Buck, has been Chief of Police in Sweet Water, Texas for 14 years. He is my first cousin. I started to school in a small box house, 3 miles N. E. of Gibson Station. My school mates were Alex Cowan and Sam Cobb of Wagoner.

The prairie chickens were so thick that you had to scare them out of the way. The coyotes and prairie wolves were numerous. There were lots of deer. The grass was high and thick, would hide a horse.

Our neighbors were the Cook family. Bill and Jim later turned out to be train robbers, later joined Cherokee Bill's Gang, the worst criminals ever in Oklahoma.

My uncle, Jesse Collins, served 3 years under General Robert E. Lee. He was in the seven day battle in Richmond, Va. He was also in the battle of the Wilderness or the Wilderness at Chancellorsville, Cold Harbor, Spottsylvania Court House and Gettysburg and was wounded three times. After the Gettysburg battle, his division went three days without food. They got some corn and

parched it to eat.

When we first came to Oklahoma, we stayed at Bird Harris', north of Bacone. The Harris boys had traps on top of the historical mound to catch prairie chickens. The traps were made out of boards. Bird Harris is a cousin of Mr. Clark Collins.