

INDEX CARDS:

Cherokee Nation⁴
Choctaw Nation
Boggy Depot
Norfolk
Black Smith
Civil War
Refugee

INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS M. CONNER
BY

Lawrence D. Hibbs.

4-13-37

CIVIL WAR DAYS AND EARLY INDIAN TERRITORY DAYS

My parents were William and Lucille Conner and they were born in Montgomery County Indiana. They moved from there to Missouri and then into Indian Territory in the fall of 1857. They first settled on the Grand river about seven miles south of what is now Grove, Oklahoma, in what was then known as the Delaware District. They lived here until a year after the start of the Civil War, at which time the conditions became uncomfortable, due to fighting and plundering by the soldiers and bushwhackers, so they moved back on the Missouri side and stayed there about six months after which they moved to the Choctaw Nation near what was then called Boggy Depot. This was in 1862. They lived at this place until 1866, and then moved to Norfolk, Cherokee Nation, where they lived until they died. My father died first, it being in 1868, and mother died in 1869. My father was a wagon maker and black-smith.

My father in the beginning of the Civil War fought with General Price and took part in a battle under the command of General Price at Springfield Missouri. Later

-2-

my father and two of my brothers and a brother-in-law joined the Command under General Stend Watie and fought under his command during the rest of the war.

I was born in Jasper County, Missouri, on March 29, 1852, and was five years old when we moved to Grove, Delaware District in 1857. I was about twelve years old during the Civil War and, of course, too young to be a soldier but I would on many occasions go out with the soldiers of the Confederate Army on their scouting trips and raiding parties. On many occasions I would be gone two or three days at a time and of course this permitted me to see a lot of the action of the Confederate soldiers.

In 1863 while we were living at Gore, Indian Territory, near the Missouri State line, my brother-in-law, who was being held a prisoner at Fort Leavenworth on seven different charges, all ranging from murder to robbery, made his escape and came through to our place. This was during a time when horses were needed very bad for the army and the people had their horses hid out so the soldiers could not find them. My brother-in-law, after walking until he was almost exhausted, finally located a race horse and took him and rode on to our place. When he arrived he told me to take the horse off into the woods and hide with him for a day or two until the

-3-

officers who were chasing him would go back. I took the horse and rode away, and I had not been gone very long before the officers came to our place but they were unable to locate my brother-in-law so they returned to their base at Fort Leavenworth and I came back home with the horse and they never did come for him another time.

My brother-in-law's name was Tom R. Monroe and he was later killed by his neighbor. At the time of his death he was living about sixteen miles south of Muskogee, near Webber Falls. It was on a Sunday morning and they were either on their way to church or coming from church. He had his wife and family and a neighbor woman and her children in the wagon and his son was riding along behind the wagon when they met their neighbor, a Noah Langley. They had been quarrelling about some hogs that had destroyed some crops. When they met, Noah Langley said: "Tom, I am going to kill you" and my brother-in-law said for him to "go ahead" and about that time my brother-in-law's son rode up by the side of the wagon and asked what was the matter and about that time Noah Langley raised his shot gun and shot my brother-in-law in the right side, killing him instantly and then threw the gun on the boy and killed him. I am unable to remember just the date this occurred.