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BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Bradley Bolinger

This report made on (date) June 15 1937

1. Name Bud Cutler

2. Post Office Address Red Oak, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Lives in town

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 26 Year 1862

5. Place of birth Harden, Texas

6. Name of Father Franklin D. Cutler Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Died and buried in Gillihem Cemetery in
Arkansas.

7. Name of Mother Angile Oneil Cutler Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about mother Died and buried in Gilliahm Cemetery in
Arkansas.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached .

Bradley Bolinger,
Field Worker,
June 15, 1937.

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"Early White Settler and Old Indian Days"

Interview with Bud Cutler
Red Oak, Oklahoma.

My father's name was Franklin D. Cutler. He was born in Tennessee, lived to the age of forty-five and died and is buried in the Gillham Cemetery in Sebastian County, Arkansas.

My mother, Angile Oneil Cutler, is also buried in Arkansas.

I came to the Choctaw Nation and settled in what was called Gaines County under the Choctaw Indian Tribe, now Latimer County. This move was made in 1880. All that a settler had to do was to locate the land where he wanted to live and ask the Indian Department for a permit to live on this land. It would cost the settler around \$10.00 to get this permit all fixed up and it stood good for the period of one year.

There were many Indians in this country in those days who had some education and had started to raise livestock. It was not necessary for the Indian to have to farm to raise feed for his livestock. Most of the whole country was outside land with immense canebrakes and forage in all the valleys and on the creeks between

the mountains, and cattle would live and do well all winter. Most of the Indians who did not have livestock did nothing but hunt the wild game that was in this country in those days, and there was plenty of that. Their women did all the work around the house and raised their corn from which they made their Tom Fuller and their bread.

The Indians lived in log cabins that they built themselves. All the cabins had what they called a stick and mud fireplace and chimney. There were no cook stoves to do their cooking on in these cabins that belonged to the poorer class of Choctaws. The Indian women just did the cooking over the open fire in what they had built and called their fireplace. Much of their equipment was home made out of wood, such as their dishes and there were no tools, such as knife and fork or spoons. The things they used for spoons were whittled out of small horns and made in a kind of spoon shape. These cabins just had one small door and very seldom did you ever see any windows or even the opening for a window. The Choctaw Indian in this country through the summer and warm weather just slept at night most anywhere around in their cabin yard.

There was not a great deal of sickness in the tribe in the early days. From my personal observation then I would say that many of them had T.B. When an Indian got sick they would call or go and get the old Choctaw Indian doctor or their medicine man. When the Indian doctor would get to the sick man, he would look him over, and, if he thought the patient had fever, he would go out in the woods and hunt water that had stood in a hollow log or stump; he would bring this back and give it to the sick Indian and roll the Indian up in a blanket and build a fire and put him close to the fire and have the Indian wife to sit close to the head of the sick one until he got better or died.

When the Choctaw Indian died in the early days, he was just placed in a home-made box, which had no lining or anything. The body was just left in the ordinary daily clothes that he had always worn. There was no dressing on the box they buried him in. They just put the body and all the dead Indian's personal belongings in the grave and many were buried in those days right out in one corner of the yard where they lived.

The Choctaw Tribe along in those days was not so

friendly with the white settlers who came here to settle.

It seemed that the Indian did not trust the white race and he was very difficult to talk to. They just had nothing to say when you tried to get conversation out of them.

The town of Red Oak was named after a large Red Oak tree that stood in front of the old Indian Council House and Court house. This big Red Oak tree was the tree where they held the prisoners when they were punished. This place was located about one mile east of where the town of Red Oak is now located. The old Council Judge was named Holson in the time when Green McCurtain was Governor of the Choctaw Tribe.

The Choctaw tribe did not have jails and prisons for use when one of their members had committed some crime. They did lots of whipping for smaller offenses, such as stealing. When an Indian was found guilty at the trial of this old Council and Court house, he was permitted to select two of his best friends to lead him to the Red Oak tree and one Indian would hold the right hand and arm along the side of the tree and to the front and another Indian friend would hold the left hand arm

along the other side of the tree and to the front. The prisoner's clothes were taken off completely to the waist and the sheriff did the whipping. For the first offense of stealing a hog or a cow from another Indian, a man was tried and, if found guilty I believe as best I remember, the Indian who did the stealing received fifty lashes as soon as he was found guilty. For the second time he was found guilty, the lashes were seventy-five and the third time one-hundred. When a prisoner was to receive one-hundred lashes, they would even stop and rest before they were all given.

When a Choctaw was arrested for the killing of another Indian (and they would get mad and do that quite a bit in those days) he did not try to escape or run away, and if he was found guilty, he was told the date that he would be shot and turned loose to go back to his home and wait until the time. On the day that the Choctaw Court told him to be there for the execution, they would prepare his box for burial and it would be setting at the foot of the big Red Oak tree in the court yard. They told me that in those days there never was a man who had been found guilty ever failed to report for his punishment. The Choctaw

Indian would tell you that he had to report as there was no other place for him to live because he could not run away and join another tribe - that was impossible. The Indian prisoner to be shot would take his seat on the end of the box he was to be buried in and his clothes were removed to the waist and a small white spot was placed over the heart, and it was the duty of the Indian sheriff to walk about ten steps to the front and with his pistol shoot the prisoner. This was done reasonably correct as the Indian sheriff in those days was a very good shot.

You could not see much young Indian courting in those days. They were very quiet in their selection and you very seldom saw a young Indian man and his sweetheart out going around together. The Indian man in this country did not bother the white settlers.

The old Choctaw Railroad came through this country along about 1890 or somewhere near that year, as best I remember. The town of Red Oaks sprung up along about the year of 1890 to 1891. Many white settlers began coming to this country then. Before this railroad came, there was only one road going through the country and it was

an old stage road and was built by the soldiers of Fort Smith. They used this one road in traveling around through the Indian tribes in order to protect them from the western Indian who was far from being civilized.

Lots of white settlers came to this country in those days because it was an easy matter to raise livestock as they were permitted to turn them loose with just a mark and brand and the stock was able to take care of themselves, both winter and summer, without ever having to be fed.