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Charline M. Culbertson  
Investigator  
March 15, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Martha Edwards  
North McAlester, Oklahoma. R. R.

I was born in Waldron, Arkansas, in the year of 1856. The house was on the line of Arkansas and Indian Territory. The room where I was born stood on the Arkansas side.

My parents were I. V. and Francis Estep. Both are buried in North McAlester. Father was a doctor with the Union Army during the Civil War. He told us it was sometimes three days they would have to go without food and when they did have food they would have to hide it. Houses were burned, cattle driven away and bed clothing destroyed. My grandfather and grandmother were killed by a bunch of bushwhackers that came in and destroyed their home.

We had no school until after the War.

Father did his trading at Skullyville and Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The store at Skullyville was operated by a Mr. Brown.

In making this trip to Fort Smith they ferried across the Poteau River; however I do not remember who operated the ferry. I recall Father telling that on

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one of his return trips home, he found four men hanging to a tree. The best thing to do in those days was to go on and leave the bodies undisturbed. The cause of this he never knew.

I have attended many of the Choctaw Indian affairs. Their ball games were very rough. When a player would get knocked out he would be dragged onto the side line till the game was over. Sometimes he would die before the game was over. I have also been to their games when they would have a doctor there to treat them when they were injured.

The Indian women wore a big plain dress with a shawl on her head and a shawl with her baby in it tied on her back. The women with their babies on their backs would ride their ponies as fast as the men. The small children were taught to swim early in life from the ages of two to six. The women wore lots of beads, bracelets and rings. Their hair would hang long with red string braided in it. They did most of the work such as planting if any was done and their garden was called a ten fuller patch. Their foods consisted mostly of corn, cabbage, beans, potatoes, tomatoes and meats. They had fresh meat or they would dry it. Their furniture was only a few home made things.

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I attended one Choctaw Cry or funeral. They had a big dinner and after it was over the women then went to the grave and had their ceremony. The men stood about the camp. These were held because at the time of the death they would be unable to get a preacher so the funeral was postponed till they could secure one.

Father didn't do much hunting as he practiced medicine over the Territory. He would make his medicine from herbs but I do not know what kinds. He travelled horseback. The Indians would pay him well; however some would want to pay him with stock.

I attended one of the Choctaw Indian war dances in the early nineties. Whites were asked to come if they would not say anything till the dance was over. They danced in a circle with a fire in the center where a big pot of tom fuller was boiling. Everyone was invited to eat tom fuller when they had finished dancing. They sat on split logs laid on a scaffold.