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Interview with

Mr. C. H. Eberle

By H. L. Ramage, Field Worker.

Mr. C. H. Eberle, 231 Metropolitan Bldg., Muskogee, Oklahoma. Born at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, 1858, and is now 78 years of age (White). Mr. Eberle attended grade school at Ft. Smith, Arkansas, went to the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville, then taken law course at the University of Virginia.

Came to Muskogee 1896 to assist D;M. Wisdom in making old Settler payments. He was connected with the Dawes Commission from 1897 until 1898, enrolling Creek and Seminole Indians. The first of of 1897 come to Ft. Gibson and assisted in the Cherokee Freedmen Payment.

Went from Muskogee, Oklahoma to Wewoka, Oklahoma on the morning of July 4th, 1898 to enroll the Seminole Indians, upon my return to Muskogee that night learned that my brother Edward W. Eberle, who, was a Lt. on board the Organ, had been in a battle all day with the Spaniards, but was not enjured, and at his death in July 1929, ranked as Admiral in the United States Navy. He was born at Denton, Texas August 17th 1864.,

While, assisting in Freedmen Payment at Ft. Gibson in 1897. The negroes was coming to the Fort for their pay, business men and others that the negro were in debt, was coming to the Fort

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so that they might catch the negroes as they got payed in order, to get what was owed them. This caused an ill feeling from the negroes, which caused several fights, but no one was seriously injured. Uncle Bud Ledbetter and other U.S. Marshals were called as seven hundred negroes joined together and rushed the pay house. The U.S. Marshalls were closing in on the negroes just starting to fire their guns. The negroes were led by a negro named Coon Vann, just as the firing started a bugle sounded and the soldiers formed a line between the negroes and U.S. Marshalls, stoping the fight at once.

His father Joseph Eberle was born in Alabama and come to Ft. Smith, Arkansas, when a young man and opened a mercantile business, continued in this business until the war started, was a soldier at Ft. Smith, then was transfered to Ft. Gibson, and made a Captain in the Confederate Army in 1863. The Federal troops drove them out of Ft. Gibson. He then went to Denton, Texas and stayed there until the war was over, returned to Ft. Smith, Arkansas and continued in his mercantile business.

Those that made the Creek and Seminoles enrollment the Freedmen and old Settlers payments are all dead except Mr. C.H. Eberle, their names were Bent Cobb, Frank Smith, Harrison Forman and a few others.

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The old Settlers payment amounted to about \$500.000 . this payment was made at Ft. Gibson in 1896. Each claim amounted to \$159.10 and was destributed to each living Indian, if the Indian was dead her or his heirs would receive the amount as to their degree of blood. The pay house was guarded by Indian Police; all those making the payment except myself went to Muskogee and stayed nights, one night an Indian Police went from Ft. Gibson to Tahlequah and made the payment they were, assisted by Frank Wisdom, disbursing clerk, Wm. Owen and Robert Taylor, we then went to Vinita, Claremore, Checotah and back to Muskogee, it taken about all summer to make the payment. At Claremore an Indian woman come in for her pay I asked what her name was and she answered Jennie, I looked through the rolls but was unable to find that name, I then asked her what her maiden name was and she answered Jeannie, I asked her if there were any one there that knew her, that could give me her name, she said, her son was there, we sent out and got him, we asked him what his mothers name was and he answered Jennie, I asked if she didn't know her husband's name, she answered, Mr. I just don't remember what his name was I didn't get very well

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aquainted with him, we were just married for one night.

We later learned her name was Headabout.

The Fredmen payment was made at Ft; Gibson in 1897 with the same procedure as the old settlers Cherokee payment, this payment was made for the Cherokee strip. That due the Cherokee's by blood was made by the Cherokee Nation. Negros from all over the Cherokee Nation were camped around Ft. Gibson, waiting for the payment and going in debt to any one that would credit them on the strength of the payment. When, the Government began paying off the negros did not pay their bills, so the merchants run an attatchment on their checks. A U.S. Marshal taken a check away from a negro that didn't want to pay his debt, that started the trouble that almost caused a riot. The negros formed a mob of six or seven hundred being led by a negro named Coon Vann, they then attacted the pay office firing several shots at it, ten or twelve U.S. Marshals were ordered from Muskogee, when they arrived they stationed them selves between the mob and the pay house, to stop their advance upon the pay house, Uncle Bud Ledbetter droped to one knee, aming his rifle at Coon Vann their leader, who was horse back, most of the others were on foot. Uncle Bud was starting

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to shoot the negro, at that moment a bugle sounded in the Army barracks and the soldiers formed a line between them and the negroes. The negroes retreated. The commanding officer stationed guards on top of a building for several days was afraid the negroes would attack the pay house again, Vann hid out a few days. F. H. Nash a merchant arranged with Indian Agency to issue the check payable to Coon Vann, and have it placed in my hands to deliver to Vann in Nashis Orchard about ten O'clock one night, I taken check to the specified place and waited for Vann several minutes he come from a clump of bushes where he had been hiding, as he could not write, he touched the pen as I signed his name I then delivered the check to Mr. Nash. From that night until this day I have not seen Vann. He was known to be a bad negro.

There were 128 unclaimed shares. The Shoeboat family was trying to claim relation along with about 300 more to a family they then learned the family were negroes and dropped their claims.

I was with the Daws Commission, in July 1898, I assisted P. B. Hopkins, James Scott and Capt. McKennom in making the Seminole enrollment. We went from Muskogee to Wewoka, which

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was a very small place at that time, we held the enrollment under a brush harbour. There is nothing more to tell of this enrollment, I am, the only one living that made the enrollment.

The Creek enrollment in Oct. 1897 by my self, Mr. Hopkins a and a young fellow by the name of Word from Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

At that time there were no railroads, we went to Okmulgee in a two seated hack, then to Wetunka, Holdenville, Eufaula and back to Muskogee. For some reason the Creeks were afraid to enroll, therefore we only enrolled a few this trip. A few weeks later the Daw's Commission issued an order for the Creeks to report at designated places for enrollment. On the second trip they come in <sup>all night</sup> ~~alright~~, the town King was under Officer under the Chief of Creek Tribes. The town Kings authority covered a certain district, such as a county might cover. The order to enroll was delivered the Chief, he then ordered the Town Kings had three or four families of his own. In December there were a few missing that should have enrolled, they were around the McDermotts store, not for from old Wetumka, Mr. Hopkins and I rented a carriage with a driver at Wetumka about midnight. There was no Hotel so we placed some tow sacks on

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the counter and slept in the store; we completed the enrollment late next evening and started back to old Wetumka, the driver got lost again, wondering around the plains, most of the night, at last we saw a light in a house, we inquired the way to town and was told we were eight miles off the road, at last we got to town, then we come to Muskogee, that completed the enrollment.