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INDEX CARDS

Gunter, Elizabeth
 Intoxicants--Cherokee Nation
 California gold rush--Cherokees
 Civil War refugees--Southern
 Watie, Stand
 Bushyhead, Dennis W.
 Schools--Cherokee Nation
 Mercantile establishments--Cherokee Nation
 Fort Gibson
 Law enforcement--Cherokee
 Steamboats--Arkansas River
 Stage routes
 Hendricks family
 Grist mills--Cherokee Nation
 Cookson
 Fairs--Fort Gibson
 Horse races--Cherokee Nation
 Cholera epidemic
 Photographers
 Crime--Cherokee Nation
 Law enforcement--Federal
 Rogers, Will
 Rogers, Clem
 Meigs, Henry
 Saunders, George O.
 Houses--Cherokee Nation
 Springs--Cherokee Nation
 Woodal settlement
 Community life--Cherokee Nation
 Tobacco factories--Cherokee Nation
 Cemeteries--Cherokee
 Chambers family
 Adair family
 Removal--Cherokee
 Collections
 Ferries--Arkansas River
 Civil War--Cherokee Nation
 Agencies--Cherokee
 Gunter, Edward

Story as given by John M. Adair

133

I was born in Ft. Gibson, June 3, 1858.

My father was John Lafayette Adair. He died in 1859.

My mother was Elizabeth Alabama Scrimpture.

My grandmother was Elizabeth Gunter, a fullblood Cherokee Indian. She lived at Gunter's Landing Tennessee.

My grandfather was Martin Scrimpture, a white man. There were two children, John Gunter and my mother Elizabeth.

My grandmother and grandfather, with my mother and uncle John, came to Oklahoma in the Trail of Tears.

My father came to Oklahoma from Georgia. He bought a place three and one half miles southeast of Ft. Gibson, (On Menard Bayou) from Mrs. Sarah Coody. She ran a famous eating house and dance hall and sold whiskey. All the old timers went there and had a big time. Wash Henson told me about the place as it was before my mother bought it. Mrs. Coody sold at the time of the gold rush and went to California with her slaves. It was afterwards reported that she was in California drinking herself to death. There have been many old half dollars found on this place. I have an 1818 copper cent that I found there. One of the Anderson boys live on the place now. Mrs. Thompson owned a place next to fathers, she sold whiskey and had an eating place. Once she told me that boats brought the whiskey up from New Orleans and unloaded it at the mouth of the Bayou. She sent ox teams to bring the whiskey to her place.

My father died before the Civil War and during the war we all went to a place close to Bonham, Texas. We stayed until the war was over. My grandfather and aunt Kate died there and Stan Waite sent a detachment to Oklahoma with the bodies. George Mayes was in the squad that brought the bodies back. Doctor Busheyhead in Claremore could probably tell the address of Mayes in Oklahoma City. 140

After the war mother married Dennis W. Busheyhead who came back from California to take charge of the Jessy Busheyhead store when Jessie busheyhead died.

My step-father was elected Treasurer of the Cherokee Nation for two terms (four years). Was also elected Principal Chief for two terms.

When a boy I did very little hunting but I fished quite a lot.

I went to the public schools in Ft. Gibson. When I was seventeen years old I went to Shur^{liff} College, in upper Alton, Illinois, for three years. I came home from college and intended to go to Claremore and look after some cattle also to settle there. My mother died and I had to stay home and look after the children, two brothers and two sisters. I sold forty acres of land in Ft. Gibson bottom for \$500.00 and sent my brother, Jessie, to New York with Dr. Fite, to study medicine in Bellview Medicine School. He became a doctor and lives in Claremore now. (Dr. Jessie Busheyhead)

During the days when my stepfather ran a store, Mr. Nash also ran a general merchandise store. Frank Nash had the first drug store in Ft. Gibson. Mr. Lipe had a general store and a bakery. Lipe was the first Mayor and a negro by the name of

Henry Scales was the first Marshall in Ft. Gibson, he was afterward hung. I remember once that Jim Brown stole a sack of flour and Mayor Lipe, who also acted as judge, sentenced him to 40 lashes on the back. Henry Scales whipped him. Brown Wright was here and paid off the Indian Claims. Mr. Percival was one of the old Post Masters that I remember. 141

Steamboats came up the river. I remember one was named the Ft. Gibson. At that time Ft. Gibson business houses were down by the barracks which was partly standing. The main street was about where the railroad is and business houses were on both sides of the street. There were lots of gold dollars used at that time. If an Indian had seven gold dollars and wanted to buy seven pieces of merchandise, as seven sacks of sugar at a dollar each, he would buy one sack and pay for it then buy another sack and so on until he had spent his seven dollars.

There was a stage from Fayetteville, Arkansas to El Paso, Texas. There was a stage stand in Ft. Gibson and another on the Gulagher place, about fifteen miles out of Ft. Gibson. The stages had four horses.

Wheat, Corn, Oats, and a little Millet were the crops that were raised here. ~~My wife~~

My wife was Tryphena Terril, she died in 1935. I am living on her allotment now. My wife's grandmother was ~~xxxxxx~~ Peggy Woodall, she was a Hendricks before her marriage.

The Hendricks family came to Oklahoma in 1832. My wife's grandmother at that time was twelve years old. They were ¹⁴² the real old settlers. During the Civil War they had to carry corn on their back to Cookson to have the corn ground, then they had to carry it back. Rufus Hendricks at Tahlequah can give their entire history.

There are some mounds up around Hulbert and they extend from Hulbert to Salina.

We use to have fairs in Ft. Gibson. People exhibited live stock and farm products. Dan Ross had the finest apple orchard in the country, and his apples always got the prize. The fair lasted two or three days, and people would come and camp until it was over. There was a three quarter mile race track and we had lots of races. Some of them were mule races. There was another race track at Ft. Gibson, on the Mariah Colston place, just south of town. I have heard Wash Henson telling of Mariah Colston having an apron full of gold and sitting on her porch betting on the horse races. This race track was a quarter mile track and was the noted race track of the country. The Brewer Brothers, Bill and Dick, had the fastest quarter horses in the country.

When a young man I was offered a job with a wild west show but could not take it on account of the fact that I was filing on some land. One of the few white people to file on land was John Jones, a great missionary in the early days. Also he had two nephews that filed on land, their name was Cunningham.

I enlisted in the army in 1898 and went to Cuba. I was there three months and in the army about four and one half ¹⁴³ months. Richard Harding Davis was ^a ~~the~~ newspaper reporter with our company.

Back in the spring of 1867 Cholera broke out in Ft. Gibson. The young people were all moved to Tahlequah and stayed all summer. The government moved the negroes out on Four-Mile creek and kept them there all summer furnishing them with provisions. Many people died in this epidemic. The disease would strike an apparently well person and they would be dead in a few hours.

There were lots of parties and dances when I was young. Most of the dances were given in private homes. Later some were over the Bushyhead store.

I remember one time when I was a young boy and was standing by the old barracks a photographer from Kansas came to town. He was in a small wagon driving a mule team. The wagon had his photography outfit in it. Behind him was the wagon with his household goods. This was driven by a negro. Mose Nevins and Jim Bevert were drunk and had their horses in the Gunningham stable. They saw the photographer come to town and hollered out that the white men were taking the county lets kill them so they shot the photographer and the negro. The negro ran about fifty yards and dropped dead. The photographer was not killed. Nevins and Bevert went home and Nevins gave Bevert a horse, saddle and five hundred dollars and told him to go to Texas. The next day Nevins went to the photographer and offered to pay his medical expense and to do anything he could provided he would try to let him off light. Nevins was afterwards tried in Judge Parker's Court in Ft. Smith and come clear.

This was one of the few cases that ever "got by" in Judge Parker's Court. He was considered very strict. Bevert afterwards joined the Texas Rangers, and was killed.

I remember another instant when Wren Gray, a bad character, was running from the soldiers (in those days before we had any Mayor or other officials, ten soldiers and an officer would go out to make arrest when there were complaints) Gray ran into the Busheyhead store and upon the second floor, he then ran out on the top of the porch and slid down one of the posts and ran. One of the soldiers saw him and knelt down and shot him, killing him instantly. The soldiers picked him up by the hands and feet just as if he had been a hog and took him up to the post.

There was a commissary north of the post (off to itself) that was guarded by one guard all the time. One night Jim West and Alex Cochran were drunk and as they passed the commissary, shot the guard. One was afterward killed as they tried to capture him, and the other was given a prison sentence.

Although I was not present I have been told that when Will Rogers spoke in the Ritz Theatre several years back, that he made the statement "the only man in Oklahoma that I envy is Johnnie Adair, he was in the battle of San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt". After saying that he ask Adair to stand in the audience. Rogers and Adair were first cousins. I have also been told that John Adair was given a medal for bravery from the U. S. Government.

ADMAS

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