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BROWN, JALLAGE F.

INTERVIEW

#7992

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BROWN, WALLACE F.

INTERVIEW

7992

Interview with Wallace F. Brown
421½ E. Okmulgee Avenue
Muskogee, Oklahoma
Jas. S. Buchanan-Investigator
October 27, 1937

I, Wallace F. Brown, was born January 29, 1880, in Arkansas. My father was James L. Brown, Cherokee, and my mother was Caroline McLaughlin Brown, Wyandotte and Chickasaw.

My grandfather, Tom Walters, with his parents, came from Tennessee to the new Indian Territory, which is now Washington County, Arkansas, and settled near where Springdale, Arkansas, now stands, about 1828. The heirs still own the original home place which was settled as a claim on their coming to this country, and my cousin, Dan Scott, is living on the place at the present time.

When the Government survey was made and the Indian Territory-Arkansas line was established, like many of the Cherokees, they discovered that they were in Arkansas instead of the Indian Territory.

The Government endeavored to remove all the settlers across the line into the Indian Territory. Though most of the Cherokees gave up the claims which they had established in the Arkansas territory and moved across the line, several families, including my people, remained on their Arkansas claims and were never molested.

My father was born and reared on the old home place, and in 1870 was married to my mother and soon thereafter established a home in the Choctaw Nation at the Arkansas line, five miles south of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Six children, including myself, were born at that place and my parents spent the remaining years of their lives there. Father died January 1, 1900, and my mother died October 9, 1900.

I was reared at the place of my birth and lived there until 1901.

I remember hearing my grandparents tell of Fort Smith as it appeared in their earlier recollection.

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They described the place as composed of a few log houses, situated about two miles up the Arkansas river from where the old fort was later established and the town of Fort Smith, of today was built.

The Smith trading post which was the first settlement of white people in that country, situated as above stated, between the Poteau and Arkansas rivers, soon passed out of existence after Fort Smith was established.

The old Skulleyville-Fort Smith road passed by our old home place, crossing the Poteau river at what was known as the Ainsworth ferry, which was about four miles east of the town of Braden.

Fort Smith was a very busy place during my boyhood days as it was a trading center for the eastern part of Indian Territory and western Arkansas, also the Federal Court sat at that place and had jurisdiction over the Indian Territory and all Federal cases of the Territory were tried there before Judge Parker, who was dreaded by all who were

guilty of law violations.

Of all the outlaws who were tried and executed at Fort Smith, I believe William Goldsby, known as Cherokee Bill, was the most fearless and possessed the greatest amount of nerve. I do not believe that he knew what the feeling of fear was. Never at any time after his capture, during his trial, death sentence, and to the minute of his execution did he lose courage.

After he was sentenced to death in the Federal court he made the remark that all he regretted was that there was one more man that he had intended to kill before he died and that he would be deprived of that satisfaction. I was present when he was taken from the Federal jail to the gallows to be hung, and he seemed to be more at ease than the officers who had him in charge, and as he passed from view of the crowd into the inclosure of the gallows, he uttered one of his Indian gobbles.

Uttering these Indian gobbles was one of Cherokee Bill's well-known habits.