

INDEX CARDS

Grist Mills--Choctaw Nation
Mercantile Establishments--Choctaw Nation
Physicians--Choctaw Nation
Factions--Choctaw
Cotton Gins--Choctaw Nation
Wealthy Indians--Choctaw
Locke, Victor M. Sr.
Gardner, Jefferson
Gardner, Jerry
Locke, Frank B.
Crime--Choctaw Nation
Jacobs, Grayson
Law Enforcement--Choctaw Nation
Ferries--Red River
Ranching--Choctaw Nation
McCurtain, Jackson
Wilson Family
Wilson, John
Wilson, William Ward

NAME: Wilson Locke

Biographic sketch, also sketch of

"THE WILSON WAR"

From personal interview with the
subject, Hugo, Oklahoma.

April 15, 1937.

Hazel B. Greene, Field Worker,
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149,
April 15, 1937.

Date of birth	February 24, 1877.
Place of birth	$\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Valliant, Okla.
Father	Dr. B. Frank Locke.
Place of birth	Tennessee.
Mother	Hattie Wilson.
Born	At old water mill near Valliant.

Father buried at Roff, Oklahoma.
Mother buried at old Goodland Academy
Cemetery.

Hazel B. Greene,
 Research Field Worker,
 April 15, 1937.

62

"THE WILSON WAR"

In the Sunday Oklahoman, under date of March 28, 1937 appeared an article, and pictures of the old water mill near Valliant. I was showing it to Wilson Locke, 60 year old quarter breed Indian. He told the following story:

"My grandfather ^{John Wilson} built that mill, from the ground up. Cleared the land, cut the first tree, built the dam and everything. The mill, his home and store were all there."

"He was a half breed Choctaw Indian, as was also my grandmother. Where they met and married I do not know, neither do I know when he was born or when he came to the Indian Territory, but he came from Mississippi. Grandmother was Jane James prior to her marriage. They had seven children, five boys and two girls. The sons were, Louie, who married and died young. Julius Victor married his widow. I'll tell you more of him later. Willie, or William Card, everybody called Willie, was later very prominent in the affairs of his tribe and was once Treasurer of the Choctaw Nation. Edward H., Johnny and Rafe were next. My mother, Pattie, and Nanny Wilson Byrd were the daughters.

"My father was a white man, Dr. B. F. Locke. He attended Medical college in Nashville, Tennessee, and was sent out here

- 2 -

to be house physician at Spencer Academy in about 1875. About two years later, he married my mother. I was the oldest of their children. A sister, Mrs. Mary Bennett, lives now about 7 miles NE of Hugo. A brother, Marian Locke is in the office of the U.S. Indian Service at Ardmore, Oklahoma. After my mother died, my father remarried another Indian girl. They have two children living near Hugo. We moved to Roff, Oklahoma, after my mother died and he had remarried. Then my father died and was buried there. The children returned to our home near Hugo on Long Creek, and kept house, and cared for the little girls.

"My mother, Hattie Wilson Locke, was buried at Old Goodland Academy Cemetery, as is also my grandfather, who was visiting us up here near the railroad station of Goodland when sickness came upon him and he died at our house. Those days we had only wagons and teams for transportation, so it was out of the question to take him back down into Towson County for burial.

"Grandmother died in the Saniterium of Paris about 1908 and was buried at Old Doaksville.

"Grandfather was County Judge of Towson County, and

was altogether a prominent and useful man among his people as well as the white people, but the full blood Indians hated to see the white and mixed breeds prosper. Hated to see civilization come to this country. So a sort of feud was started. The full bloods would catch his stock out on the prairie or in the woods and kill them. Not for food, but just to torment the mixed breeds and white men. Things just kept getting worse and worse, until my father saw that he could not live there, so he just abandoned our home, where I was born, where Oak Hill Negro Academy is now located, one half mile west of Valliant, and father and mother moved to Goodland, New Goodland, we called it.

"Old Goodland was the school and Presbyterian church, located about six miles southeast of the Goodland railroad station. We settled a place on Long Creek and lived there many years.

"Grandfather's home was across the creek to the south of and a little west of the old mill, up on the hill, and all back of it was a dense forest of trees, I mean to the south of the house. He built the mill of upright 1 x 12 planks. Those planks were a curiosity to us because every house we had ever seen were made of logs or hewn planks. The extremely

steep roof was made of hand riven boards, called "clap boards." I do not remember any drop siding as shown in the picture, (March 28). Grandfather, of course, built the dam and the water was the power that ground the corn and ginned the cotton for people for miles and miles around. The log store and the mill made a sort of a Community center. Lots of people came to the store and mill, either to trade or to have corn ground or cotton ginned, and altogether he did a thriving business. But as I said before, the Indians were envious of him. They didn't want any one man to have more than another.

"On the east end of the mill was a platform just high enough for a mule or a man to stand under comfortably. Wagon loads of cotton were driven up beside this platform, the cotton was unloaded with baskets, each basketful weighed separately on the old fashioned scales that were used to weigh cotton in the fields. Each basketful was weighed and the weight set down. Then the total numbers of basketfuls and weights were added to find out how much one's bale of cotton weighed. Here again the "Clapboards" came into use. When the wagon-bed was full of cotton, these boards were stuck all around inside the bed to make sideboards, so as to be able to carry enough cotton to make a bale. A door opened onto this platform and just inside

the door was the press that pressed the cotton into bales. After the cotton was ginned it would be all over the floor of the mill. Pitchforks were used to pile it into the press. Underneath was the "machinery" of the press - the mules. He operated the press by being hitched to a pole attached to the press and going around and around like an old fashioned cider or sorghum mill.

"Late one evening my grandfather got his hand crushed in the gin. There it was, nearly night and my father's instruments and anything else he might need were at home, two miles away, and something needed to be done quickly. The amputation of two fingers was imminently necessary, so my father, Dr. Frank Locke, amputated those two fingers with a picket knife, a hand saw, a needle and thread, and the aid of a big buck negro the hold Grandfather, who rolled nearly all over that gin floor before it was completed. However, father got the job done and pretty neatly too. That feat was talked of all over this country and in northeast Texas. Father might not have had proper instruments or chloroform at home, I don't know, anyway he hadn't them there."

"Among our friends, white and mixed breeds, I mean those who helped Grandfather against the full blood indians, were, of

course, his sons, Julius Victor, who had married his son's widow, V. M. Locke, Sr., my father, B. Frank Locke (M.B.), Jimmy and Jerry Gardener, (Jefferson Gardener, who was once Chief of the Choctaws, did not help). Also, Dick Kelly. We had other friends whose names I don't recall now. There was an old negro, they called him "Grundy"; I don't know if that was his first or last name; but anyway he posed as Grandfather's friend, and he found out all he could and then told it to the full bloods. Grandfather and his friends found out that this old negro was betraying them. They caught him out someplace, he was horse hunting, and had a boy with him and they killed him and threw his body on a pile of brush and burned it. People for a long time referred to that killing as "The barbecued nigger." Some of the men wanted to kill the boy. Grandfather was opposed to killing a boy, said he didn't mind killing a man who deserved it, but not a boy. While they were discussing it, someone shot the boy. There was a crowd of them together, and Grandfather never knew for certain who did it.

"Another traitor to our cause was a full blood named Grayson Jacobs, full-blood sheriff of Towson County. He was shot by a firing squad of whites and mixed breeds. Grandfather said he never saw a braver man. In the face of death, he never

he never flinched, stood as steady as a wall. You see, the full-bloods were trying to run the Wilsons and friends out of the country. One morning, pretty early, they surrounded the mill and store and began shooting. The shots were returned by the Wilsons. When the firing ceased, three Indians were dead on the ground, and John Wilson was wounded. (He carried that bullet in his knee till he died about 1910 or 1912, somewhere along about that time). The full-bloods were routed, but left with the promise that they would soon return with reinforcements. The wounded lad and Grandmother were put in a buggy; other members of the family, with provisions, bedding etc, were loaded into wagons. Others rode horseback and they "lit a shuck" for Hook's ferry. (Lit a shuck, Mr. Locke explained, meant they hurried). Hook's ferry was on Red river about five miles away. Grandfather had a big yellow horse called old Isaac. He rode him and would not hurry, tho' the balance of the family did and urged him to do so. Old Isaac would never go out of a fast walk with Grandfather upon him. So he "walked" him to the river, with Uncle Edward begging, "Hurry Daddy, they will catch us." Grandfather said, "No, I'll never run from my home. I toiled too hard to make it, to run from it." The family were waiting at the ferry for him and they had just gotten ferried across when a band of Indians ran up on the

- 8 -

side they had just left, firing at them as they got out of range.

"Remember now, that the store and mill was left wide open, for anybody to ransack who wanted to do so. Dick Kelly wanted to slip back over there and put strychnine in the flour and other eatables, but Grandfather would not permit that. That was just too bad because that would kill innocent men, women and children. Those goods were precious, had cost lots of money, but there was nothing to do but just leave them. Taking a few for immediate consumption. The Indians didn't want to steal anything, they just wanted to destroy the property of the white and near white men. Oh! they might have taken a few groceries for immediate consumption, but not much. When they killed the cattle and hogs, they did it for spite and left them lying wherever killed. They were opposed to this country being fenced up. They wanted it to remain in a virgin state and these white men and half breeds had brought barbed wire over here and fenced good grass that God had made to be free for all and the Indians cut every barbed wire fence they found all the time. And in their council they passed a law prohibiting fencing with barbed wire. So these Indians were defending what they believed to be their God-given rights. Later, this law was amended, allowing each

individual to fence a certain number of acres, and so many acres for each child. That law was never repealed.

"Grandfather had hauled those precious goods from Paris Texas, by wagon pulled by oxen. They had cost him lots of snake root, hides, furs, etc. Nobody much had any money. Some of the goods were brought up the river by boat and hauled from Hooks' ferry to the store.

"It was in the Spring of the year when my people were driven over into Texas, They stayed about three months, when through the wise counsel of Principal Chief Jack McCurtain, who called his tribe together and advised them that development was best for the country and that it was wrong to do things by force and bloodshed. They were allowed to return and rebuild all that had been torn down and partially destroyed. He gathered up the remnants of his stock and by careful management got a good start again and died quite wealthy.

"Willie Wilson was three times married. His first two full-blood wives and children are buried at Doaksville. A daughter, Cleo, two sons, Oscar and Rufus, are buried there. Rufus has a son now residing at Fort Towson, Clarence Wilson. Willie Wilson's ^{last} wife was a white woman, Miss Ollie Beard, from Paris, Texas, so when he died she had him buried at Paris. Ed Wilson is buried at Doaksville. Rafe at Valliant. A daughter of Nannie Wilson Byrd lives at Antlers. She is Mrs. Clark Wasson.

- 10 -

"John Wilson has several children scattered over the country. A daughter, Hattie Wilson Dale, now Mrs. John Montgomery, of Salt Lake City, Utah, was U. S. Field Clerk at Hugo, for years.

"The last Mrs. W. W. Wilson resides with her son, William Ward Wilson, Jr., and her daughter, Miss Ollie Jane Wilson at Norman, Oklahoma.

"That Wilson War, as it was called must have been in about 1887, as well as I remember. I have never been back and the picture that I have carved out of wood is from memory. I did not see in the picture, published in the Oklahoman, the road that wound through the woods and came down the hill south of the mill and crossed the creek on the east. That road was made by settlers coming to the mill from over in about Pilot knob, and all south of where Swink is now, but it was there."