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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Mary D. DorwardThis report made on (date) May 25 193 71. Name Henry C. Walkley2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 839 South Wheeling4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day Year 18755. Place of birth Rogers County near Claremore6. Name of Father William Walkley Place of birth EnglandOther information about father 7. Name of Mother Alcy Chambers Walkley Place of birth Cherokee NationOther information about mother Cherokee

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

Mary D. Dorward, Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
May 26, 1937

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HENRY C. WALKLEY

A biographic Sketch

From a personal interview with the subject
(839 South Wheeling Ave., Tulsa, Okla.)

I was born September 1, 1875, in a two-room log house along Panther Creek, three and one half miles south-east of Claremore, Oklahoma. After a few years, in 1888, father built a frame house a mile north of the cabin (two and one half miles south-east of Claremore) into which we moved. This house stood exactly upon the old military road between Forts Gibson and Leavenworth, a road which by that time had been abandoned. The deep gullies worn in the old road are still there. That house burned to the ground but was rebuilt on the same site. In those days there wasn't another house for forty miles. We could go clear to Fort Gibson and not see even a post.

My father was an Englishman, William Walkley, and what he was ever doing away down in that part of the country I don't know. When the Civil War broke out he was building a stone house near Pryor. He immediately left and joined the Confederate Army. He had always been one to save his money so when he started for the war he used his own savings to buy himself a horse. He was

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eating his breakfast at Boggy Depot one morning when he was surprised by Federal soldiers. He managed to escape but had to leave his horse behind.

My mother was Alcy J. Chambers Walkley, a Cherokee, daughter of James Chambers. Her people were Federals while my father was a Confederate.

EDUCATION

I first went to school at West Point, a Cherokee school one mile south and a little east of Claremore. The little frame building is still standing but has been converted into a dwelling. In 1890 I attended Willie Halsell College in Vinita. In 1891-2 I was in school in the Cherokee Male Seminary at Tahlequah.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

I used to engage in politics quite a bit. I was elected to the Cherokee council before I was old enough to take the oath of office. Age of eligibility was twenty-five. I was elected in August and wasn't twenty-five until September, but the council didn't convene until November so I reached the required age before I was

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called upon to take the oath.

Buck Lewis and I fathered the movement for separate statehood, the Sequoyah movement, but we lost out so we pitched in and helped obtain single statehood. I campaigned all over Rogers County for Clem Rogers (father of Will Rogers) for constitutional delegate. I recall a speech made here by William H. Taft, who was then Secretary of War in Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet. He made his speech at the corner where the Cosden building now stands (Fourth and Boston, Tulsa) and he told us we weren't ready for statehood, weren't capable of governing ourselves.

That was in the summer of 1907 and Congress granted us statehood in November of that same year.

CHILDHOOD REMINISCENCES

We used to have to go clear to Chetopah for our groceries. That was about eighty-five miles away and was a week's trip. Our salt we got from Mazie, a little settlement southeast of Chouteau. Instead of salt springs they had drilled wells and how they ever drilled them I don't know. Then the water was piped from the wells in log pipelines down to a place where it was easier to

get it to boil it down.

We ground our meal at Chouteau. The mill was simply two flat rocks fitted together and turned by two burrs. Mother sifted the meal in a willow basket. She would shake it around and as she shook, would blow the chaff off until the air was full of it.

My grandmother Hendricks (married to James Chambers) came from Georgia. She was in the first group that came west, the Old Settler group. They were driven forcibly from their homes in Georgia, all their property and possessions were taken from them and they were herded inside a stockade just like cattle, standing in mud to their ankles, until they were started west. My grandfather came from South Carolina, with one of the immigrant groups.

CEMETERIES

The Chambers families had two private cemeteries. The Joe Chambers cemetery is about three miles due south of Claremore, while the Henry Chambers cemetery is five miles due south of Claremore.

FERRIES AND FORDS

The only ferries I recall were at Catoosa and at the Frisco bridge where Bird Creek empties into the Verdigris River, not far from Claremore. There were several fords; the Galcatcher ford four miles west of Claremore, Chambers ford eight miles southwest of Claremore, Stidham ford ten south miles west of Claremore, and the Fox Taylor ford, twelve miles south of Claremore, all of them over the Verdigris River. There were several people drowned at the Fox Taylor ford.