

MILLS, LOUIS

INTERVIEW

7744

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

Field Worker's name Mary D. Dorward

This report made on (date) October 5, 1937

1. Name Louis Mills

2. Post Office Address Central Hotel, Tulsa, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Central Hotel

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1893

5. Place of birth Catoosa, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father George Mills Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about father Served in Civil War

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

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 _____.

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Louis Mills is a fullblood Cherokee, son of George Mills, grandson of Jim Mills, great grandson of Oo-ga-tan-nee Gossa Heel, meaning seven-horned dragon.

My great grandfather, Oo-ga-tan-nee, came west with the Cherokees on the Trail of Tears. * He was a sort of scout on the trip and would be sent ahead each day to select a place suitable for a camping place for the party. Being unusually swift of foot he would go on ahead, select a site for the camp, and be back with the party in about ^aan hour. Oo-ga-tan-nee lived to be hundred and twenty-five years old.

My grandfather served in the Civil War as a sergeant with the Union forces. The soldiers were unable to pronounce his Indian name so they gave him the name Jim Mills, which he retained. He lived to be one hundred and ten years old.

My father, George Mills, served in the Civil War as a scout for the Union forces stationed at Fort Gibson. He owned a very beautiful horse which he often rode on scouting expeditions. One day he was trapped by a party of Confederate Osages, but they forgot to shoot, permitting

* This statement we were unable to reconcile with the tradition that Oo-ga-tan-nee was an Old Settler Cherokee: Field worker.

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father to get away.

Father was a Medicine Man, known as a conjuring man. He seemed to have the gift of second sight or the powers of a medium. People, both white and Indian, often came to him to have him locate lost articles and he could always tell them where the lost articles were.

Catoosa was a great hideout for outlaws. Outlaws, especially Cherokee Bill, frequently came to Father to find out if it was safe to stay in town or when to leave or where to go. He could always tell them when the "law" would come, or when they were safe and he was always right. Once Cherokee Bill came to father to stay all night, but Father advised him not to stay, saying that the law would get him about midnight. Father plead with the outlaw not to stay, but he was tired and said, "I'll take a chance. The law can't find me before morning." Sure enough just as Father had said, about midnight the officers broke the door down and got the outlaw.

James French, outlaw, was killed in our house. He had robbed a store in Catoosa, was shot, but escaped and fled to our house. There was a deep snow on the ground, and just at sundown Father heard someone at the gate

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calling out, "Can I come in and get warm?" It was French covered with blood. Father had him come in, stripped him of his guns, and made a pallet on the floor for him. Then Father said, "We'll put up your horse." When we came back in James French fearing we were officers, had us covered with a sixshooter, one that Father had overlooked, so Father took that one away from James too.

Father felt certain there would soon be trouble so he took me to town to be out of the way. It wasn't long before a posse came. Father, knowing that French was not armed, called out, "Don't shoot," but they started fighting and soon were shooting and French was killed. After the fight was over there was blood all over the house, bed clothing, walls, and everything.

Jim Adkisson, white man who some years ago was postmaster at Tulsa, once lost an automobile. He came to my father to find out where it was. Father told him that he would find it down near Bristow and sure enough he did find it there just where Father had told him he would.

Father traveled widely among all the tribes in Indian Territory--Cheyennes, Pawnees, Mohawks, Seminoles, and others besides his own Cherokee people. He often took me

with him to act as interpreter, especially among the English speaking Indians, as he spoke no English. He had his own ways of making the medicine he used. He treated the eyes of a Delaware man for more than a year and succeeded in restoring his sight so that this Delaware could see for about a hundred yards.

CEREMONIALS

The Osages have a Medicine dance similar to that of the Creeks. I have worked among the Osages and have assisted in preparing the medicine. The herb used in preparing the medicine for the dance is imported from Old Mexico. It is similar in appearance to the ball on a cactus plant except that it is round. The pods are first cut in two and dried like apples, then a tea is brewed from them, the tea being used in the dance. A quantity of medicine sufficient for a year or two is sometimes prepared at one time.

ALLOTMENTS

My allotment was southwest of Catoosa. The Indian Hills golf club is on part of it. I also had eighty acres about six miles east of the club, plus about thirty acres two or three miles north of Moody's in the Cherokee County.

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My father's allotment was sixty acres three miles north of Catoosa, and eighty acres six miles east of Catoosa adjoining mine, along what is known as Timber Ridge.

HEIRLOOMS

I have a cupping horn that belonged to my great-grandfather, Oo-ga-tan-nee. It is of buffalo horn, and was placed over a pain or scratch, then by sucking on it the blood was drawn out drawing the poison with it.

I grew up near Catoosa. I remember as a boy that I killed squirrels with bows and arrows I had made myself. The bow and arrows were made of locust wood, while squirrel hide was used for the string.

I have no recollection of my mother. She died when I was six months old. Father and Mother had taken me and gone on a hunting trip over in the Usage Territory. While there Mother became ill with pneumonia and died before we could get back home.

The name Catoosa means hills, or mountains.
Oolagah means perch, or fish.