

LOWE, ALEX

INTERVIEW

#7529

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

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley.

This report made on (date) September 16, 1937. 1937

1. Name Alex Lowe.

2. Post Office Address Weleetka, OKLAHOMA

3. Residence address (or location) First house west of Alabama bridge.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1880.

5. Place of birth In the old log house section 16-10^N 11^E (NE¹).

6. Name of Father Rev. William Lowe. Place of birth: Indian Territory

Other information about father Spokoko Jarjo his town name

7. Name of Mother Sallie. Place of birth: Indian Territory

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 9.

Grace Kelley,
Interviewer.
Sept. 16, 1937.

ALABAMA CHURCH.

The Alabama Church was first located on Section 16-10-11, but later was moved a half mile north where it is now. It was the first Baptist church and all the other Baptist churches of the Indians are branches of it, such as the Arbeca Church near Bryant, and the Wetumka Baptist Church southeast of Wetumka. There are a lot of Baptist churches for it was so far that when the weather was bad some of the members could not make ^{the} trip so they would get permission to start a church nearer to their homes.

OLD MEMBERSHIP RECORD BOOK.

I have the record book of the Alabama Church dated March 28, 1874, with the names of men members on separate papers from the names of the women. A lot of the names have been marked out with the dates of the ^{persons'} death. The record book is written in Creek. Jim Fife was the pastor and my father was a deacon at that time. This record book does not show the organization of the church in it so there must have been other older books but I don't

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know what became of them. I don't believe the Alabama Church started before the Civil War but it is very old.

OLD HOUSE.

I am fifty-seven years old and I was born in the little log house on the north edge of Weleetka and I do not know how old this house was before I was born. It is still in use but the other three or four old houses have been torn down and newer houses built. This settlement was not exactly a village, just relations lived in these houses. There were quite a few Indian boys who lived with my father and helped around the place for their keep. From what others have told me, I would call it a small orphan's home.

THREE GRAVES INSTEAD OF FOUR.

The old graves are those of my mother and my father's mother and a child. Section 16, 10, 11. They are on the same section as the one in the yard but are southwest, not over a quarter of a mile from it. They were close to where the church was before they moved it.

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LEVERING WETUMKA MISSION.

When I went to school they called it the Levering Mission. It was named for the first missionary who was there. That was in 1889 and there were somewhere about fifty boys and fifty girls at this mission. That is not exactly the number but it is near it. The boys had to work so many hours every morning and every evening but from nine a.m. till four p.m. we studied. At first the teachers furnished the clothes, shoes, food and everything we needed but later on they quit furnishing anything but our room, board and care which included medicine and doctor. Major Fore was our superintendent and Mr. Wright was a teacher. Mr. Wright was unmarried at that time but later he was made superintendent and was married to one of the teachers. I do not know her maiden name but she taught after their marriage.

I never could understand why they had us do the work that we did in the mornings and evenings but they were very strict and insisted that we should work hard and do just as the teachers told us. We cut brush in the river bottom. As I was small I gathered this brush

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and put it into a pile. The cleared space was not used for a garden nor for anything. The brush was just allowed to rot instead of being burned and the place grew up again into more brush. Once in a while the better pieces were used for wood but we were not getting wood, we were just working.

They had certain rules at this mission and everyone knew these rules and if they were broken you would get a whipping. Sometimes if you did not get your lessons you would have to stand on the floor. The teachers were pretty strict but I can't say that they were too strict.

OLD CATTLE TRAIL.

From Wetumka the old cattle trail crossed the South Canadian River three-fourths of a mile west of the bridge then went past Weleetka crossed the place where Highway 75 now runs, about a thousand feet west of the Alabama Creek bridge. This old cattle trail went a quarter mile east of Pharoah, north, through the Rentie Settlement and through the Noti Tiger place. There is a bridge on Deep Fork Creek which is three hundred feet west of the old crossing.

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Indian Police.

The Indian Police did not have as much authority as the United States Marshals but they had more authority than the Light Horsemen had had. The Light Horsemen could only arrest their own people. The Indian Police were more for the protection of the Indians. The Indian Police could arrest either white or Indians for any crime but the crimes were ^{mostly} trespassing. Trespassing in this case means that white men would bring cattle or whiskey into the Indian Territory.

OLD TIME GRAVE YARD.

A mile and a half west from Weleetka on the Elizabeth Fire allotment there were fifty or more very old graves.

OLD TRADING PLACES.

Wetumka was our closest trading place but Eufaula was the closest railroad town. We had to take our cotton to Eufaula to the cotton gin and to sell it. The McDermott store was built near where Okemah is now. Norburg at first had a sawmill then a store was built north of McDermott. "Neger" Jim Barnett had a store close to the Bryant church.

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INDIAN NAMES.

Every Indian, both men and women have their Town names but when they join the church they drop these names and are given Christian names. Father's Town name was Spokoko Harjo but when he joined the church it was changed to William Lowe. I don't know who gave the Christian name to him but the Town name is given to an Indian boy or girl as soon as he or she is old enough to take part in the town festivities. Town names are given by the Town King or Micco.

NANCY SEVERS CEMETERY.

A half mile north of Section 16-10-11 there are about fifteen graves in a field. ~~There is no fence~~ around them but the graves are in good condition.

There are some houses and some tombstones. This cemetery is a half mile west of a colored cemetery.

~~TUCKABATCHA TOWN.~~

John Jacobs of Holdenville belongs to Tuckabatcha Town which is close to Holdenville.

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DOG TOWN.

Dog Town was south of Henryetta but it was not a town. It was a settlement of whites who were mean but not robbers nor criminals and it was not a hide-out of outlaws. The people in Dog Town were just mean folks who didn't want anybody to come in there nor bother them. Everyone was afraid of the people of Dog Town, so they did not go down there much, if visitors went to Dog Town they were scared away.

SNAKE UPRISING.

There were a few of the Seminoles, Choctaws, Creeks, and Chickasaws following Crazy Snake. They ~~were the ones who did the fighting.~~ The negroes were too scared to fight. I have been told that Crazy Snake died in the Choctaw Nation and I believe it's true but I don't know where he is buried. There are some graves ~~at the Hickory Ground, Town Yardica Harjo burial ground.~~

CLAN KIN.

Men and women were grown before they were married in those days. You never heard of a child of sixteen getting married. They were twenty-five or older; they

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took care of their health and lived longer. They obeyed their parents and if they were unruly the parents didn't have to punish them, the Clan Kin who were older did that in a very severe way. The Clan Kin was more strict than now, loved each other but feared each other. They would scratch you with four scratches on the backs of the calves of your legs until the blood would run and the scratches would leave scars. When these Indians would have a dance the women were particular and stayed where they belonged; there was no going off alone in the dark. Clan Kin is not a blood relationship but is treated the same as blood kin. If they catch you doing wrong they cut your ears or nose off. You can't marry one of the same clan but if you do and they find it out, they punish you. For some things they thrash the life out of you, so many men hold you and others whip you hard.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

Stealing was punished with the same penalty no matter what the object stolen. The size and price of the object stolen had no effect as to the punishment.

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Fifty lashes were given for the first offense, a hundred for the next one and the criminal was shot to death the third time he or she was caught stealing. I do not know whether they ever had to kill anyone for stealing or not but that was the law. Murder was death to the murderer unless he or she could prove self defense. The Deep Fork District Court house was close to the Norburg store which was north of Okemah.

TERMINATION OF NUYAKA BOARDING SCHOOL.

When Jack Brown was the Superintendent of Nuyaka Boarding School it was closed and he was transferred to the Uchee Boarding School at Sapulpa. Albert Azendall was his principal there. All the pupils of the Nuyaka school were sent or transferred to the Uchee Boarding School.