

PARRIS, W. P. (BILLY)

INTERVIEW

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

PARRIS, W. P. (BILLY)

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Charles H. Holt,

This report made on (date) April 28, 1938

1. Name W. P. (Billy) Parris,

2. Post Office Address Hominy, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1870

5. Place of birth Farm near Tahlequah

6. Name of Father Noah Parris Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father Full blood Cherokee

7. Name of Mother Betty Downing Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother Part 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 3

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Charles H. Holt,  
Investigator,  
April 28, 1938.

An Interview with W. P. (Billy) Parris,  
Hominy, Oklahoma.

W. P. (Billy) Parris, a Cherokee Indian, was born near Tahlequah on a farm. The farm was on or near "Fourteen Mile Creek" West of Tahlequah. He was born in the year 1870, and at that time there were many white people living in that part of the Territory, and he never learned, or was taught much of the Indian customs, even though his father was a full blood Indian, and his mother a half-breed.

Mr. Parris' father taught him how to make bows and arrows but he never took much interest in learning to shoot them. He was fond of hunting and first used a cap and ball rifle, but soon got a more modern one in which he used shells or cartridges.

In his early boyhood days his Indian name was Sour-Nook, but after he was grown he was not called by that name by his Indian friends. The family did not farm very extensively. About twenty or thirty acres were planted to corn and wheat. The first farming tools that Mr. Parris recalls using or working with on the farm when he was a boy were home-made

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plows such as double shovels, Georgia stock, and "V" harrows. A small herd of stock was kept, usually two or three work horses, a few cattle and sometimes a half dozen ponies on the range.

While hunting Mr. Parris often caught young deer or fawns and took them home as pets, but when they were grown they often went back with the wild deer, but would come back at intervals because they had been fed at the farm. To keep hunters from killing his tame deer when they strayed he kept something conspicuous tied around the necks of the deer. There were some antelope, but they soon disappeared. They were not all killed, but Mr. Parris believed they moved their range to the southwest.

Pigeons in those early days were so thick that when all in flight they looked like dark clouds, but they like the antelope disappeared and some people believed the pigeons tried to cross the ocean and were drowned.

The school was two miles from the Parris farm. The name of the school was "Fourteen Mile Creek School". Mr. Parris' first teacher was Dolly Spears. This school was

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not an Indian school, but was a regular community subscription school which Indians and whites both attended. The school was used for church services and also for all community activities.

Samuel and Joel Mays were Chiefs of the Cherokees at one time. They were brothers and quarter blood Cherokee. They were cattlemen. Rabbit Bunch who was a Full blood was a chief. Tom Harris, Tom Buffington, and Dennis Bushyhead were, also, officers of the Tribe. Some of the old timers in the Fourteen Mile Creek community were families of the names of Waterfaulen, and Coen Parris.