

SANDERS, WASH

INTERVIEW

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Gus Hummingbird,
Interviewer.

September 10, 1937.

Interview with Wash Sanders
Stilwell, Oklahoma.

Wash Sanders, a full blood Cherokee was born in
the District of Cherokee Nation, June 25, 1871. He
is the son of Dave Sanders, full blood Cherokee and
Betty Sanders, both natives of the Cherokee Nation.
Wash was born near the present village of Lyons, Okla-
homa. His grandfather was a North Carolina immigrant,
who came to the Cherokee Nation with other immigrants
about 1837. They settled on Callison Creek.

Ben Sanders, the grandfather of said Wash, was not
an immigrant or an old settler. He came after the West-
ern Cherokees, and before the immigrants. He committed
a murder in the old country, and fled west to the Chero-
kee country.

Education

Wash Sanders attended school at Old Round Spring,
which at that time was located about where the Union
Grade School is now, three miles north of Bunch, Okla-
homa. This was the earliest school in that part of the
Cherokee Nation. He does not remember the names of some

... the old together in this school, he did not receive
... an education. He only finished the second grade.
... not many books were to be found in that time.

The school was in a district...
... of the school...
... for the benches. Children...
... could afford to go to this school. Some...

Church

There were no churches in the...
... service...
... homes for the community...
Johnson, Samuel, Selfwood, and...
Baptist Church. The name of Selfwood was the
first Methodist that was known anything about but he did
not establish a church as did the Baptists later. Ten
years prior to statehood the Jehovah's Church was
built near the village of Lyons, Oklahoma.

Immigrants

This part of the story has been told to him by his

father, as told by Ben Sanders and his father, Hooley Sanders.

Hooley Sanders came here with the immigrants about 1837 or 1838, but Ben Sanders came here a little later than the old settlers and before the immigrants. He was forced to leave the east on account of a murder that he committed.

Hooley Sanders said that when they came here, the only thing that their Uncle Sam gave them was an old chowin' ax and a couple of hoes. They came here in the fall of the year. They had to build their homes first, which they did at once, for the government gave them rations from the several commissaries that were established throughout the Cherokee Nation.

A few of the Cherokees were given a horse, which was the property of several in the same community. But most of the farmers made their first year's crop with the hoe. Small patches of land were cleared the first year. Most of this was not broken. They dug holes about four feet apart and planted their corn. Luck was theirs that year, for they had a good crop. The third year after they came, the commissary was taken away, as the Cherokees were able to make their own living.

grandfather of Wash, was present when the treaty was made at Tahlequah between the old settlers and the "Immigrant Cherokees" in 1839. The older Sanders people say that they came near having war after the immigrants came.

This meeting was called by the leading men of both factions. The Sanders were there, ready to take their part in anything that might take place. They were willing to fight, because they were angry at the Ridge faction for selling the land back in the east.

All of the old settlers were in favor of the treaty, the immigrants were the ones who were opposed to it.

According to the story, John Looney was appointed as Chairman of the old settlers. Going Snake was principal speaker at this meeting. There were thousands of Cherokees present.

This division can never be remedied as long as the earth stands according to Wash Sanders, who is strongly opposed to every move made in the way of benefitting the Cherokees. He is now a leader of the Night Hawks in southern Dair County and northern Sequoyah County.

This division has caused the Cherokees to differ in

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Elections were held every two years throughout the Cherokee Nation. They usually had very interesting campaigns. The voting precincts were located a long way from the homes of many Cherokees. The voting place for the Sanders family was at Flint Court House which was about seven miles north of their home.

The secret Australian Ballot was not known at that time. They usually voted for a man by calling his name. It was very difficult to try to lie to a candidate.

The qualifications for a voter were: male person, eighteen years of age. Women were not allowed to vote in any election.

Railroads

After the Cherokees became interested in politics, all of the powers of granting or allowing any public utilities were given to the councilmen and senate of the Cherokee Nation. Any public utility could have the man elected who would favor his or their interests, by buying votes. This happened when the railroad law went into effect. The Kansas City Railroad was held at Wilcox for years. At that time the legislature was composed mostly of full blood Cherokees. But after the

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next election, most of the men who were sent to the council and senate were mixed blood Cherokees. They were the ones who voted that the lines of said railroad be extended through the Cherokee Nation. The full bloods were never in favor of the railroads.

allotment

This was similar to the railroad law. The mixed blood council voted in favor of it.