

HANNA, GROVER C.

INTERVIEW

#7130

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

Nannie Lee Burns

August 12,

Worker's name

Report made on (date)

1937

Grover C. Hanna (Cherokee)

330 C. NW. Miami, Oklahoma

Home Office Address

Residence address (or location)

September

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1881

DATE OF BIRTH: **Near Grove, Oklahoma, on Cowskin Prairie.**

Month

Day

Year

Place of birth

James A. (Paddy) Hanna

Name of Father

Place of birth

Other information about father **Cynthia A. McGhee**

Name of Mother

Place of birth

Other information about mother

For complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Use on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of pages attached **From memory and as told in the family.**

Interview with Grover O. Hanna and wife.
330 C. NW. Miami, Oklahoma.

I, am of Cherokee blood and was born near Grove, on Cowskin Prairie, September 21, 1881. My parents were Cynthia A. McGhee and James A. (Paddy) Hanna, both half blood Cherokees who were married at Grove in 1880.

My grandparents were Susie A. Beck and Albert McGhee and both were born in Georgia and were eastern immigrants.

My mother had three sisters; Joanna (Arch) Jones, who lives here in Miami with her daughter, Mrs. Walker; Lucy Ann Hudson, now living in Coffeyville, Kansas; and Emma Smith.

REMINISCENCES.

My grandparents came with the wagon train from Georgia and I have heard my grandmother tell of the long trip. She said that many of them, both men and woman, refused to ride in the wagons and walked all the way. The hardships of this long trek told on their strength, together with the sorrow of being forced to leave their nice homes and many belongings. They were allowed only a very few little things, and many

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died on the way. Graves were dug where ever they chanced to die and the body was buried in an unmarked and now unknown grave. Their relatives and friends were forced to go on leaving their loved ones thus.

She also spoke of seeing her first poll parrot on this trip.

Wishing to stay close to the supplies promised the first year they settled on Long's Prairie. They had nothing and had to build and fix everything so their first home was a small log one, the logs cut and placed by the men. Crude outbuildings were also put up, but everything had to be built from the abundant forest around them.

Grandmother lived to be one hundred and four years old and at the time of her death all of her teeth were good. She never wore glasses but had her second eyesight when she was seventy-eight years old.

We Indians have some signs that we still have faith in. Here are some of them: Whenever you see a dark cloud that looks like a storm, take an ax and stick it up in an ash-hopper with the blade of the ax

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pointing towards the cloud and the ax will separate the cloud.

Whenever a screech owl comes near the house or the door and hoots, in as many days or weeks as he hoots, you may expect a death in the family. This is sometimes said of the whip-poor-will also.

We haven't always kept dates like the white man and in recalling the time of year of a certain event, sometimes they would say, at potato digging time, etc.

CIVIL WAR DAYS

My grandfather, Albert McGhee, was a soldier in the war, and left his wife to care for her four girls and an invalid sister, Cynthia. The soldiers and bush-whackers soon took all the things that they wanted and that were of any use, leaving those at home without horses or cattle to work. What cattle escaped being stolen were those on the range or in the woods that ran wild as was the case of the hogs. Grandmother's only dependence and help to support her family was a faithful cur dog that was trained to catch and hold hogs. When out of meat, she would take the dog and

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go to the woods and hunt till they located a hog and after the dog caught it, he would hold it until she could kill it. This would not always be good meat, as the wild hogs had very little to eat and the meat was often lean and tough. But at that, it meant life to her family. There were no cans or jars to can in, but they dried a few berries and fruits. I have heard her tell of one particular incident. The snow was knee deep and she had only some corn meal in the house to eat, not even salt. She took Ring and trailed through the snow till they found a hog which he held until she killed it. The salt was obtained by gathering up the dirt where there had been a salt lick for the cattle and boiling the dirt to get out the salt.

Each year grew a little harder and when the war was ended and those of the men who were alive returned, many found their homes destroyed, families separated, some killed, fields grown up, and fences destroyed and burned. They began like the true pioneers they were to gather up and brand what cattle and hogs outside they could, to rebuild their homes, clear their fields, etc.

AUNT CYNTHA

I have referred to mother's invalid sister, Aunt Cynthia, who lived with them. Years before the war she and Uncle Henry lived on the Illinois River. They owned a darkey called "Nigger Smoot" whom they had had many years and trusted. One night, Uncle Henry expecting to go turkey hunting the next morning, had Smoot help him mould bullets to use. That day, Uncle had sold a good horse and had the money in the house. That night after they had gone to sleep, Smoot took an ax, killed Uncle Henry and pounded Aunt Cynthia until he thought she was dead. Then taking the money, a good horse, and an old rifle he left the place.

A day and half later, Uncle Zake Proctor a half brother of grandmother's found them. Aunt Cynthia was not dead, but never recovered and was an invalid afterwards. Uncle Zake took up the trail of the negro by the horse's tracks, and trailed him from the Illinois River to Fredonia, Kansas. Reaching there one evening about dark, he inquired if a darkey of Smoot's description had passed through or was there, and was told that such a person was spending the night

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in an old smoke house there. Opening the door of the smoke house, he let the light of the lamp he carried fall on the negro. He was the one he had been trailing. On being awakened, the negro found himself covered with an old Captain Bald. Uncle Zeka compelled the negro to dress and brought him back tied on and riding the same horse that he had ridden away. The negro was hung in the yard where he had committed the crime ten days before.

Uncle Henry's name was Henry Barton. He lived on the Illinois River near the old Hilderbrand Mill. I used to spend quite a bit of my time there when I was growing up. I have seen ten and twelve deer pass the door there.

THE MILL TRAGEDY

About the mill tragedy, the miller and a client had an argument one day at the mill and the miller decided to kill his client. He raised his gun to shoot and shot at the man, but the shot killed Poly Hilderbrand, Moe Beck.

The trial was conducted at the school-house, under the old Cherokee law. On the day of the trial

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the Downings sat on one side, Zaks Proctor on the other. If they stuck the miller it meant a battle. If they didn't stick the man it meant a battle. The Downings started fire and Uncle Zaks Proctor killed six of the Downings before he fell and raising up he crossed two more.

MY PARENTS

My parents, Cynthia McGhee and James A. Hanna, were married and settled on the Cowskin Prairie in 1880.

On city election day in Southwest City, in 1881, Uncle Jerry Hanna, father's brother; his wife, Aunt Arch (Mrs. Jo Anna Jones); and my father went there to attend the celebration. While there that day my father and Tom Scraper, a full blood, had a fight. Scraper knew the road that they would travel home and went ahead of them and some distance from town laid himself crosswise in the road. It was dark and the mules stopped and refused to go on. Getting out they found Scraper laying there, picked him up and put him in the back of the hack, intending to take him home. Father was riding in the back seat and before long Scraper who had been pretending to be asleep or drunk,

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began black guarding and my father knocked him backwards out of the wagon. Later, in the mix up that followed father raised his right arm with a 33 Smith & Weston to shoot Scrapper, when Uncle Jerry came between and he shot his brother through the right eye, killing him. Turning, he shot Scrapper three times through the neck and made his way to Arkansas where he lived the rest of his life. During the excitement, the mule team ran away with Aunt Arch in the hack and was stopped ^{on} the Line Road near old Professor Shield's home. The Indian, Scrapper, did not die.

FATHER'S LATER LIFE

He took the name of James Wilson, married again under that name and reared a family there. Becoming sick and thinking that he was going to die, he told them what his real name was and where he had lived. They buried him at Sallisaw and later his wife and the children came to Dodge east of Grove, hunted up my mother, told her what had happened and the two women became good friends. He left five months before I was born and I was about fourteen when he died.

MY EARLY LIFE

Mother married George Talbot, a white man, and after his death James Welch, a Cherokee. I was supposed to be reared on Cowskin but spent much time with the folks on the Illinois. I not being impressed with the importance of school, attended but little and when I did I walked three miles to a school in Cave Springs. The worst punishment I ever had was one day in early fall before they had fire in the stove. My teacher stood me up on a box wood stove before the room and placed a blue sun-bonnet on my head.

MARRIAGE

I married Josie Albercrombie, a white woman at Sulphur Springs in 1907, but had moved with the folks to what is now Ottawa County and Miami in 1898. We had one child, a daughter, Lucie May, who now lives southeast of Fairland. After the death of my wife on November 11, 1915; the following year, I married Vada Voophies on September 19, and we have one daughter, Lorane.

MRS. HANNA'S STORY

My mother was Sarah C. Givens, the daughter of William and Nancy Ann Givens nee Derick, both of whom were born and reared in Georgia and came with the wagon train from there. My father was Samuel D. Voorhies, who came with his parents from France and settled at or near Saint Louis.

FATHER'S LIFE

Father when quite young was a soldier in the Indian Wars. Later he served through the Civil War. One day, when young, he was struck by an arrow that went through his leg and he was compelled to ride two days with his leg strapped to his saddle legs and the arrow still in it, before he could get it taken out.

Another time he was drinking from a spring branch when he was struck over the head and was taken to St. Louis to a sanitarium for treatment where he remained some time.

After the close of the war, he returned to the Creek Nation in Indian Territory, and under the name of Dave Harris, married a full blood Creek whose father

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I am told was the Chief of the tribe at that time. What was her name? I do not remember her first name but she had a brother named George Perryman. They had two children, a boy Walter, born in 1880, and a girl named Lula. These children received allotments as Creeks. Their mother died and my father drifted away. I have tried to find them, they have never known father's real name and still think their name was Harris. He married my mother, Sarah C. Givens, at Noel, Missouri, in 1890 and she lived with him for eight or nine years before she knew his real name.

His health began to fail and realizing the need of finances, he wrote to his mother who had moved to Oakland, California, and had not heard from him for twenty-five years and thought him dead. Some way he had kept track of where she was for his discharge and other army papers. When they came and he applied for a pension under his real name of Voorhies, my mother learned for the first time that his name was not Harris. So in Neosho, Missouri, in 1895, he remarried my mother under the name of Samuel D. Voorhies. He only lived to receive one payment and died five months

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before I was born, on May 10, 1897. I had two brothers, Albert and Dan and a sister, Mamie.

MOTHER'S FOLKS

As I said, her parents came with the Road train from Georgia where they had a nice home which they were compelled to leave. Later when the Cherokees were being enrolled for allotment here, grandfather refused to allot his family, saying that he never intended to give the Government another chance to make him move.

One thing I remember, grandmother often told. One night when they were camped by a stream, she found a yellow shiny rock which she kept. I have seen her put it in a pan of water and shake it around to make it shine. It was gold and she wore it away washing it to make it shine when she was showing it to people.

They settled close to Saratoga Springs and had a one room log house with a shed room. Grandfather, known as Bill Givens, the cattleman, later settled on Cowskin Prairie and bought cattle all over the country, even driving them from Sweetwater, Texas, and

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shipping from Neosho, Missouri, then the nearest railroad point. My grandfather and his son, Charlie, cut the logs and built the one room log house 16 x 18 which today stands on the highway (I think 71) at the Givens Spring, and has been preserved as a landmark. It is now open to tourists passing. This farm remained in the family until my uncle Charley sold it only a few years ago.

Grandmother was neat and had so many pretty dishes and things. I always enjoyed being there. She wove, spun, and knit and during the war made baskets of buck bushes. I have heard her say that the bushwhackers came into their home, compelled them to get breakfast for them, mistreated them, and took their horses. They holed up their cabbage, potatoes, apples, etc. for winter.

Grandfather died in 1900 and Grandmother about eight years ago, in February, 1929, at Gravette. She is buried at Sulphur Springs, in Butler Creek. The Given's Farm was on the Missouri-Arkansas Line.