

LOONEY, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

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251

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

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) June 28, 1937

1. Name George Looney

2. Post Office Address Weleetka, Oklahoma Route #1

3. Residence address (or location) 1. mile S. E. of Dad's Cor. Rainbow Highway.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 16 Year 1892

5. Place of birth South of Bryant in Okfuskee County

6. Name of Father Joe Siah Looney Place of birth Creek Nation.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mattie Rainey Place of birth Creek Nation

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 7.

Interivew with George Looney, Weleetka, Okla.
 By - Grace Kelley, Field Worker.

253

July 9, 1937.

After the church was started, its law was different. If they were church members, the scandal was told to the mother of the church and she tried to bring about a settlement. If she couldn't stop the carrying-on, she took it up with the church. The man had committed a crime against both women and had to ask for forgiveness from both of them, and promise not to do the crime again. The girl had to ask his wife for forgiveness and then they would all shake hands in Brotherhood. All would be forgiven and forgotten and not spoken of again. If either one refused to ask for forgiveness and didn't promise to obey the law of God and the Church, that person was put out of the church and all other churches were told not to take him or her into their church until the law was complied with.

MARRIAGE AGE OF LONG AGO.

A woman from thirty-five to fifty was the right age to marry. Until that time they were to obey their parents and old felks to get the benefit of long life promised to them. A girl or boy, but especially the girl, from eighteen to twenty was too young to accept the burden of marriage. When she was thirty-five she was grown and able to work

and raise a family. That is why some of the older women lived to be a hundred and older.

BOOKS WRITTEN IN CREEK.

I have several books but not a regular library; the first and second readers, a dictionary, law book, and some of my father's books during his term as District Judge of the Deep Fork District.

DISTRICT JUDGES, LIGHT HORSE CAPTAIN, ETC.

My grandfather, George Sullivan, was the District Judge for four years; Father was the next one and he was a Light Horse Captain when I was a child.

OLD LOG HOUSE STILL STANDING WHERE PRISONERS HELD.

The old log house where I was born and reared sits in the corner of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5-10-12. I've lived close there all my life and haven't been out of Oklahoma, though I have made a few trips inside of Oklahoma. Father kept prisoners chained to the bedstead. I remember seeing one who had been convicted of stealing a cow, given fifty lashes on the bare back in the yard. He was hung or stretched up by the wrists and green hickory saplings as

big as one's thumb, and three or four feet long were used. When they got through they rubbed salt in the cuts to stop the bleeding. The ones who talked mean were treated mean but the ones who didn't say anything were treated good.

FREIGHT FROM MUSKOGEE TO NEGRO JIM'S STORE

When I was a little chap there were no towns between Muskogee and Negro Jim's store. There were only one or two stores at Eufaula, Cap Severs and Parkinson at Okmulgee, and Seneca had just been established. Licoski had that Post Office. The trail or road angled through across Coal Creek, Dewar, Wild Cat on to Muskogee.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ARBECCA CHURCH, BAPTIST.

The Alabama Church was holding a meeting a mile northwest of the Taskabatcha school (where W. F. Hopper taught. His daughter is Clara Hopper Porter of Oklahoma City). When it broke up, father told them it was too far for us to go to Alabama Church and that he wanted to start a church closer. They gave him permission and he organized and established the Arbecca Church in March, 1904.

OLD DEEP FORK COURT HOUSE TEN MILES NORTHEAST OF OKEMAH.

He bought, tore down and hauled down the Deep Fork

Court House and rebuilt it for the first Arbecca Church. It was used for two years, 1904 and 1905, when they built the present one opposite the old one.

Jackson Barnett, the son of Negro Jim, had a full-blood Creek mother, and he bought the old Court Church House and built it smaller for a camp house for his family to use but later gave it back to the church. The Arbecca Church owns it, but his family uses it.

Father was pastor of the Arbecca Church from 1904 until 1912. I was ordained Deacon in 1904 and Minister June 6, 1917, and the next day I registered for the draft but wasn't called. I was qualified for a pastor in 1923 and have been the Pastor of Arbecca ever since.

HIGH SPRING, FIVE MILES SOUTH OF OKEMAH.

Old man Wind started the High Spring Baptist which is an offspring of Alabama, the same as Arbecca. Most of the Winds are dead now and their family cemetery is on the highway just north of the church about a couple of miles. Robert Severs has that church now.

CRAZY SNAKE, CHITO HARJO.

Chitto Harjo means Crazy Snake in Creek. He was

quite a prominent man who wanted things to stay as they had been in the past. He didn't understand it would be a benefit to his people, who would have their own business to transact, didn't observe deep enough but just saw the bright side he had been accustomed to.

GREEN PEACH WAR.

Ispahachan was like Crazy Snake, and San Checota was for allotment and that was the cause of that war.

CORNELIUS PERRYMAN AND CHIEF PORTER.

I knew Cornelius Perryman and would go to see him, five miles west of Red Fork. He was a big fleshy man. He and Porter were against allotment as for the Osages. The Osages owned the land "plow depth" individually, but all under that belonged to the whole tribe. Perryman said each man should own the land deep enough to be buried and to have a water well. He was a big man and couldn't be buried and covered up at plow depth.

I like allotment but would rather have had it like the Curtis Bill, then there wouldn't have been a few rich and a lot of poor Creek Indians. All would have had the same wealth,

which would have been right.

SPRINGFIELD

George Sullivan was Clerk at Springfield but I can't tell anything about it except it was west of Weleetka.

LIGHT HORSE

The Light Horse guarded the borderland to keep whiskey from being transported into the Creek Nation. The bottles were broken but the men weren't jailed. White men were taken to Fort Smith before they began taking them to Muskogee.

Bass Reed was a Malatt^e fellow and a good officer. He never killed a man but would go up and tell his business. He served a long time in this country. (He was a U. S. Marshal instead of a Light Horseman. G. K.)

Young Indians didn't use tobacco nor drink. The old Indians did smoke but they didn't allow the young ones to use tobacco in any form. They weren't allowed to drink either.

TREE TRUNK BURIALS OF CREEKS.

By George Looney, Weleetka, Okla.

About a hundred years ago the Creeks lived in villages which were far apart. When a new-born baby would die, it was

so small that it didn't smell very far and not far enough to be offensive in the villages. So they put it in a hollow tree and boarded up the opening so nothing could bother the body. Remember, they didn't have tools like we do now and had to do everything in the easiest and yet good way.

HAD OWN DOCTORS AND MEDICINES

They had their own doctors who made their medicines from herbs and weeds. There was no T. B. among them.

FACE PAINT .

Red Clay was used when they wanted red paint for their faces to get ready for the ball playing. Powdered Charcoal from the fire was used for the black on their faces.

CREEK TOWNS.

Thlop Thleece Town is the one I belong to. It is seven miles northwest of Wetumka and four miles northeast of Slick.

TWO CREEK NEGRO TOWNS.

Canadian Town was between Weleetka and Wetumka

north of the Barnett Settlement.

Sand Town ----- I don't know its location.

OLD FASHIONED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

They used to make a fife out of cedar. Tucker Barnett had started to make one before he died but didn't get to finish it. He lived three-quarters of a mile northeast of Bill Tiger's house. His wife might have it, I don't know.

DIFFERENT DANCES OF CREEKS.

Later they had the Fiddle Dance, which was similar to the square dance, every Christmas night, New Year, and Old Year. I don't know why they called it "Old Year's Day" for it was exactly seven days after the New Year's Day. They had a big dinner and dance.

In the summer they had the Ribbon Dance, Fetta Dance, then the Stomp Dance.

BALL GAMES.

This is a rough game that would kill ordinary people, but the players take medicine which protects them from the blows. There never was an Indian killed in a ball game,

but if he would get^a hit any other time like the ones he got during a game, it would be^a different story to tell.

A regular match game is between two towns, from forty to sixty on each side. There are two goals a hundred and twenty-five yards apart made by two posts similar to foot-ball goal posts. The ball must be thrown between the posts for a score of one. The winning score is twenty and is kept ^{this:} Like: Score Keep - ers: One for each side sit on the side lines opposite each other with the field between them. They have ten sticks like pencils and when a score is made they stick one up in the ground until ten scores have been made. When the eleventh score is made, they pull one up and for each other score made they pull one up until all are pulled up and the twentieth score has been made. They jump up and call "Dead" which means "Finished", and the game is through.

Before the match game, the players stand at their own goal posts while the others are betting their saddles, horses, shawls, money, silk handkerchiefs, anything and everything. Then the players march to the center opposite each other and lay their sticks on the ground. Each man

and the sticks are counted to see that the sides are equal. The one who counts them says: "O. K." and orders them to pick up the sticks and stand back, and tosses the ball up. There are guards in the center like basketball, ten in the center, five on each side, another bunch between the sticks and the centers, and again at the sticks, Forwards and Guards. When the playing is going on, the women carry water and Cold Flour Water to the players. Some think the Cold Flour Water is the best to quench the thirst and not have to drink too much.

COLD FLOUR WATER.

When green corn is tough enough to shell, parch to a brown color. Roll to take the chaff out, put in a mortar and pound to a powder. Use one cup, teacupful, in a gallon of water, two or three teaspoons of sugar if you like. Some don't use sugar.

GOOD INDIANS DIDN'T FEAR CYCLONES.

There weren't so many cyclones and tornadoes as there are now. I don't know of one ever killing an Indian so they didn't fear them. One never saw a storm

cellar in an Indian's yard. They lived under trees, sometimes had to be out in the storms.

Thomas Reed lived east of Hanna and belonged to the Hilluby Church. He was in bed when a storm came and blew part of his roof off. One of the rafters caught on a NO. 9 twine and that held it from falling on him. He was unhurt.

LEGEND OF THE STORMS, CREEK.

Grandma and grandpa left and went to the end of the world. Before leaving they said; "When I approach in clouds I have wings and blow the evil ones down."

Three miles north of Wetumka, west of Wetumka Lake, a half mile west of Salt Creek Church, the water tastes so strong with salt that one couldn't drink a drop of it. People used to boil it for the salt.

CATTLE OWNED BY A FEW.

Ones like Mpti Tiger, Checota, the King, or one in head of cattle office had from a hundred to four hundred. Father had seventy-five or eighty head and fifty sows and about a

hundred and fifty pigs. They ran out and increased, both the cattle and the hogs.

When they would have barbecue people would come from fifty to seventy-five miles by oxen and teams. The Regular and Town King would have conversation. The Regular King would have a rail fence he wanted made, the Town King's men would work for a week or ten days to make the rails and would get their cattle for the barbecue this way.

Jim Barnett, father of Jackson Barnett, now living would buy cattle between Weleetka and Bockertee and drive them to Muskogee to ship to Kansas City. Father helped with the driving.

Some Texas men made an agreement with the head leaders, an association was formed and thousands of Longhorns were pastured here. There were no fences so they just grazed wherever they wanted to. A few of the Indians got the money.

SCHOOLS.

From 1906 to 1908 I went to the Nuyaka Mission.

John M. Robe was the Superintendent and a good one.

Mrs. Francis Robe was a good and kind teacher, but his sister, Miss Lotta Robe, was cranky. All the teachers I had were nice but her. But there is one thing about the cranky ones; they taught you more for you were afraid not to know the lessons.

Some of the boys cut stove wood a half hour after breakfast. Some of the boys worked in the kitchen, dining room, bed or school rooms. Every two weeks they would change and the ones who had been working inside worked outside, milking, feeding, etc. Every Saturday morning the buildings were scrubbed. Saturday afternoons we had recess, talked, took walks, went to town or wherever we wanted to go.

After I left Nuyaka I went to Bacone College at Muskogee. In these schools English was taught. I have learned the Creek reading and writing since I quit school. It was easy, I suppose, because I already talked it.