



FIELD WORKER BILLIE BYRD

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Okla.S-149.  
April 23, 1937.INTERVIEW WITH SAMUEL SIMMONS  
OKEMAH, OKLAHOMA. BORN HAINA,  
OKLAHOMA.FATHER'S NAME GEORGE SIMMONS  
MOTHER'S NAME MARTHA SIMMONS.

It was in the neighborhood of Eufaula, Oklahoma, then Indian Territory, that George Simmons was born on January 1, 1861. His father was Thomas Simmons, a full-blood Cherokee, and his mother was Deliah McIntosh Simmons, a Creek of Hillabee town (tulwa). The parents had come from the old country of Alabama. The father, Thomas Simmons, died the same year that George was born, and the mother, Deliah, left with the child moving near to what is now the Big Cussetah ceremonial grounds, about fifteen miles southeast of Okmulgee. They stayed there three years or until 1865 and then moved back to Eufaula. They lived at Eufaula until the death of the mother, Deliah, in 1876. George was then fifteen years of age.

George Simmons was then facing a life of orphanage and poverty. He tried to keep up his appearances for he had to wash and patch his few clothes in the best way that he could. He had no one left to even urge him to take up school work at this time.

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He spent his time with the other boys of his own age and it was then that he learned to ride horses. He had undoubtedly inherited the roving nature as he often told his comrades that he "wanted to go West." Before he did go anywhere he was taken to the Asberry Mission. He stayed there a number of years or until N. B. Moore, a white missionary worker among the Indians, brought about the transfer of George Simmons and Cornelius Carr to the Carlisle Indians School established at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. With the realization that a long trip and a long separation from their acquaintances and home was in store for them, the spirit of the boys lacked the usual bravado. Some tears were shed while waiting for the train at Eufaula. Although Cornelius Carr was taken to Carlisle, George Simmons was never taken, because he ran away from N. B. Moore at the last moment.

The desire to go West was still in the heart of George Simmons at this time. He really did start West until he came to the Sac and Fox reservation where he immediately made the acquaintance of a Sac and Fox youth whose name is not known. Together they journeyed south to Shawnee and were joined by a Pottawatomie boy whose name is not known.

Although doing most of the traveling on foot, these three were inseparable even when the first trip was made to Texas. They brought back whiskey and found ready money.

While on the first trip, the surroundings in Texas and the Indian Territory were keenly noted by these three. The hills, prairies, and wide open stretches of lonely lands did not escape the eyes of the boys.

The second trip to Texas was faster traveling, because they rode horses which they had stolen. From that time and for three years, these young men were hunted and wanted by the law, not only in the Indian Territory but also in Texas where they terrorized the open country along the border with their bold rustling, killing, and all the deeds dear to the minds of outlaws. A fresh horse was available for every day and every night. They stole cattle and sold them to one person and turned right around and stole them back and sold them to some one else.

The wild country produced the common necessities to enable them to eat and live their own lives. Wild hogs were in abundance and many of their meals consisted of unsalted, roasted portions of pork.

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After tiring of the Texas border and their too many deeds of thievery the boys transferred their hideout back into southeastern Indian Territory, namely in the Wichita mountains. Even here, there was no place for them to rest, stay, or sleep peacefully.

Everything has an ending and George Simmons realized that he was growing weary of the life he was leading. It was on top of one of the Wichita mountains, at the close of day, that there was a turning point in the life of George Simmons. He pondered over many things as he and the only remaining friend sat on a hill top. He was holding on to the bridle reins of his horse which was standing near him and with his Winchester across his knees, that George and his friend noted that there were two little yellow birds flitting in and out of the bushes and trees. These were free to go where they wished. They were not hunted or wanted by any man for crimes. George Simmons' heart was sorrowful and he cried for himself. He desired his life to be spent as other free things. He confided to his friend and they resolved to return to civilization and face whatever consequences awaited them.

When George Simmons and his friend arrived in Shawnee they were arrested and tried for their many crimes. They were thus sentenced to spend one year in the prison at Wichita, Kansas. At the expiration of that year, they were free.

They started on foot back to Shawnee. They first reached the Osage Agency and obtained work splitting rails and fixing fences. With the earnings of a month's work, the two proceeded to Shawnee. When the destination was reached, George Simmons and his Sac and Fox comrade parted to go their own separate ways .

George Simmons started back east and reached Seminole where he worked three years for London Coker, a wealthy man and cattle owner.

After the three years spent at the Coker place, George Simmons finally arrived in the vicinity where he had spent his early days as a boy and secured a job at Proctor's Store, established in 1882, in McIntosh County, seven miles northwest of what is now Hanna, Oklahoma. He hauled freight from Eufaula for this store, but later became a mail carrier under Wesley Smith who was the postmaster.

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When the store ceased to exist in 1900, George Simmons became a follower of Chitto Harjo. At a time when Chitto Harjo and some thirty of his followers were encamped in the Choctaw country, they were arrested and immediately taken to Muskogee. These men had been causing some trouble and although feeling ran high against these men, they were not severely punished. Their hands and feet were securely bound to iron posts so they could not escape and after a short trial they were taken to Leavenworth, Kansas, to serve eight months.

When George Simmons returned to his home community in McIntosh County from Kansas, he found that the government desired to buy eighty acres of his allotment to establish the town of Spokogee, known as Dustin now. The site for this little town had already been surveyed and the government was willing to pay \$5000.00 for the land. The negotiations were completed. Besides the \$5000.00, a new buggy was thrown in and was considered a good bargain.

Tony Proctor persuaded George Simmons to invest part of the \$5000.00 in a store. This store was begun in 1903 and became known as Trenton. A good sized tract had been surveyed out for a site, but this town never did materialize. Tony Proctor

had a half-interest in the store and was the buyer as well as the carrier of supplies from Fort Smith. While at Fort Smith one time, Tony Proctor, on the spur of a moment and having a little more than enough of liquor, purchased a \$1000.00 worth of supplies which George Simmons refused to acknowledge. Things were not turning out so well at this time, and eventually, in 1906 the store of Trenton went out of business.

George Simmons became the chairman of his district, in 1907, of the committee of the district to discuss the subject of statehood which was an important issue at the time. No definite outcome is related to this question from this party.

Later on, date unknown, George Simmons was baptized and became a member of the Wewogufkee Baptist church, McIntosh county, section 3, township 8 north, range thirteen east. He became a minister and served as pastor of this church for eighteen years. Although George Simmons had a life of wrong yet in the last years of his life, he became a mighty man for the principles of right and the word of God.

George Simmons was called to rest on March 9, 1927, and was buried at his beloved church yard, Wewogufkee.