

QUALLS, ROMULUS ALVIN

INTERVIEW

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 Indian-Pioneer History
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Interview with Romulus Alvin Qualls,
 Cherokee Indian,
 Claremore, Oklahoma

LINEAGE

Romulus Alvin Qualls answered the questions asked and volunteered the following information:

I was born August 6, 1892, near Tahlequah at a place called "Qualls", so named after my grand-father Qualls.

My Mother

Mrs. "Bill" Qualls was born at Park Hill near Tahlequah, Indian Territory, her maiden name being Maggie Johnson. She married William Alfred Qualls of Qualls, Indian Territory. He was a rancher.

On my mother's side, my grandmother's maiden name was Adaline Payne. She was born in North Carolina in 1849. There in the old Cherokee Nation she married Milo Romulus Johnson, a Civil War veteran and a Cherokee Indian. Her father, Mica Payne, served as sheriff in the Cherokee Country in North Carolina, before the Civil War. Her brother, Joe Payne, served as United States Marshal for the Cherokee Country for more than twenty years before the war; while another brother, William G. Payne,

filled the same office for sixteen years after the Civil War. He was later a member of the Legislature of the State of North Carolina. William G. Payne is the father of our present Court Clerk of Rogers County, Henry Payne. Henry's brother, William F. Payne, was this county's first Registrar of Deeds, Henry and William are nephews of Mrs. M. R. Johnson, who later married Jim Rattlingourd, another Civil War Veteran (Cherokee).

Jim was an old settler, Cherokee, his parents having come west long before the Cherokee immigration. His father served with Tah-chee and Spring-Frog in a deciding battle on Claremore-Mound, between the Cherokees and the Osage Indians. Claremore is an Osage name. This mound is ten miles north of Claremore, Oklahoma.

My grandma came to the new Cherokee Nation here in Indian Territory in 1871. They settled between the towns of Stilwell and Tahlequah at a place near those villages called "Rabbit-trap." When Grandma and Grandpa Johnson came here to this Nation her two brothers, Joe and Isaac Payne, came with them. There were also about twenty others who came with

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them. They later settled at a place called Park Hill. There Grandpa Milo Romulus-Johnson died in 1895 and is buried near Park Hill, which lies a few miles south of Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Her second husband, Jim Rattlingourd, has been dead just a few years now.

My grandmother told us many interesting tales and true stories of things that happened before the Civil War, as well as about her emi from North Carolina here to Eastern Oklahoma. She had eight children, three girls and five boys; she has twenty-eight grand children; forty-seven great-grand children; six great-great grand children. There are many of the Payne descendants here in Rogers County.

Annie Parnell, daughter of Mary (Ballard) and William Parnell, was born December 13, 1889, a quarter of a mile west of Braggs, Indian Territory.

Her mother was born May 1, 1870, at Qualls, a little town between Braggs, and Tahlequah, then Indian Territory. Her mother was Mary Ballard, who was one-half blood Cherokee Indian.

Her father was William Parnell, a white man,

but reared among the Indians from the age of ten. He is now 88, being born in Missouri on February 14, 1869. His parents brought him here to the Indian Territory in the early days to the hilly country near Muskogee, Oklahoma. They live about 22 miles from Muskogee in the Cookson Hills.

Mr. Parnell can tell many true stories of the outlaws and of law; also, of hideouts down in those hills near Muskogee. In fact he carried water to the outlaws and had his wife make them a water bucket of hot coffee, and he would play the guitar for them. He was paid for this. Parnell was a blacksmith by trade. He sharpened plows, shod horses, fixed broken down wagons, made harness, and did all the regular work of a blacksmith. It was hard work but he is still living. People knew what hard work was in those early days. By horse and wagon was the main way of traveling in the pioneer days before Oklahoma became a State.

My Wife's Grandfather

Thomas Ballard was the last Judge of that District when Oklahoma became a State. He was born

in Georgia. He located at Park Hill, Indian Territory. He has an old Testament that was printed at the Park Hill Mission in 1884 by the printer, John Candy. It was printed and written in the Cherokee language. My wife has it in her possession today and it is in good condition to be so old. It is bound in red leather and fastens like a pocket book. It is tinted in gold.

He married Marian Willard who doctored with herbs and ministered to sick Indians.

The Indians drank spring water in those early days and many of them had worms in their bodies. My wife was one so afflicted. Her doctor, Grandmother Marian Willard Ballard, would make medicine out of old Jerusalem-Oak. She would gather the seeds, put them in water, let them set over night, in the morning she would sweeten the juice or liquid and have Annie (my wife) and the other children and grandchildren take two or three swallows of it before they ate their breakfast. They always had results. Wormy children always crave candy and so she would cook the juice or liquid down low, add sugar and have them eat the "Jerusalem-Oak-Candy."

Mrs. Qualls says it was bad but they had to eat it.

For bad colds she made a tonic out of horehound ~~weeds~~; and she also made a candy from that liquid too. They boiled sassafras bark for impure and thin blood.

There was a weed that when made into medicine would make them sweat off impurities and break a fever up. It was called sage. Dog-fennel and catnip were good for cry-babies when they had the stomach-ache. There was a weed that grows right on the ground and spreads out; it has fine small leaves and the stems are of a milky substance. She would boil this and it healed the inflamed stomach and caused the fever to go down. It was not a bad medicine as I recollect. It tasted like oyster soup and looked like it had milk in it. They were also required to eat lots of wild greens and onions for the blood. Beets were raised and eaten for the yellow jaundice, which is caused from bad kidneys. They were required to gather and eat many blackberries as they were good for blood and nerves. Her grandmother was truly a nature and herb doctor.

FOOD

Our main food in those days was the principal Indian foods of that day. We ate blue dumplings, canuchi, hominy, parched corn, coffee, um-ik-ey, wild grape soup, pumpkin bread, corn-pones and bean bread.

Mr. and Mrs. Romulus Alvin Qualls live near Oklahoma Military Academy on the old "Johnson" place.

Mr. Qualls' mother, Mrs. William Alfred Qualls, lives near the Franklin hospital on East Second Street, not far from Woodlawn Cemetery.

Mrs. Adaline Rattlingourd makes her home with them through the summer. They are all Rogers County citizens and vote here.