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Interview with Mrs. Eloise Grayson Smock

Eufaula, Oklahoma

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by

O. C. Davidson, Field Worker

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My father G. W. Grayson a full-blood Creek Indian, was born and reared in the Creek Nation near Eufaula and at the age of 19 years he enlisted in the Confederate Army and served as Captain under General Cooper. He had a company of Creek soldiers and participated in the battle of Honey Springs on Elk Creek.

My mother Anna Stidham Grayson, was born and practically reared in the Creek Nation on the hill west of Muskogee near where the U. S. Veterans Hospital now stands. My grandfather, D. W. Stidham, was a Creek merchant and ran a store there before the Civil War.

During the war most all the Indians were forced to leave their homes and property and go south for the safety of themselves and their families. My grandmother had died prior to the war so grandfather loaded my mother and her two little brothers in a wagon along with what other possessions he could take and drove to Sulphur Springs, Texas where they stayed until the war ended in 1865.

Upon their return to the territory after the war, grandfather stopped on Red River and built him a log house and made boards and covered the house without the use of a single nail. There was no place nearer than Fort Smith Arkansas that nails could be bought so he made wooden pegs and fastened the boards down with them.

About all the food they had was corn and the wild game which they caught and killed.

My mother was only a young lady and she had to grind all their corn for bread with a mortar and pestle. She also carded the cotton, spun the thread and wove the cloth and made clothes for the family.

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Grandfather had one old Negro slave named Prince, who, when the Negroes were freed, would not leave him. Later, Grandfather moved to Eufaula and built the home in which I was born in the year of 1880. My father was a representative of the Creek Nation from the time I can first remember until his death in 1920. He was frequently called to Washington D. C. in the interest of the Creek Government. Many times taking his family with him.

I think the greatest thrill of my life was on one of these trips to Washington. When I was a very small child I attended an Easter egg hunt and party on the White House lawn and the President (Grover Cleveland) shook hands with me. My mother had made me a new Easter dress and bonnet which I wore and I surely thought I was a grand lady.

My father also served as Treasurer for the Creek Government for many years. He handled all the money for the Creek payments and there were no banks to keep the money in and he had to keep it in the home. He always went horseback to distribute this money out at various places taking the money in a pair of old leather saddle bags. He was sometimes very uneasy, fearing he would be robbed. There was much robbing and stealing going on in the country but fortunately he was never bothered.

I will never forget one time we were at home and father had a lot of government money in the house. Early in the night we heard footsteps in the yard and pretty soon something began to scrape and knock against the house just like someone trying to break in. Father got his gun and slipped out and slipped around the house to where the noise was and found that it was a cow rubbing herself against the corner of the house. We all had a big laugh about it but it was a great relief to find that it was only a cow.

On November 1, 1917, President Woodrow Wilson appointed father Chief of the Creek Nation. He held this position until his death in 1920. My father and his brother were engaged for many years in the Merchantile

business in Eufaula under the firm name of Grayson Mercantile Company. **371**

The old home in which I was born still stands and I am now living
ext door to it.