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Nannie Lee Burns
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GRANDMOTHER'S STORY.

My grandparents were Richard Fields, early Chief of the Texas Cherokees, and his wife, Elizabeth Jane Blagg Fields; George Howard and Mary Carroll Ward.

My parents were Ezekiel J. Fields and Sabra Elizabeth Howard. They were married in the Delaware District by Thomas Jefferson McGhee, Cherokee Clerk.

My grandparents were born in Georgia. I do not know at this time just when they came to the Indian Territory but they came as a private party and not till some years after the Trail of Tears.

Told by Polly Fields.

My Grandmother Fields was born in 1845 and it was always interesting to us grandchildren when she recalled the events that happened during the Civil War, and I am giving some of the incidents as she often

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told them to us.

About the middle of the war, the Pin Indians came one day to the Fields' home. They ransacked the home, taking anything that appealed to them, ripped open the feather beds and emptied the feathers onto the floor and took the ticks and tied them on their horses, tore up the floor, poked holes through the ceiling trying to make Grandfather tell where his sons Van, George and Dan were. These boys were not old enough to be in the army. My father, Ezekiel, was and he served under Captain William Eckridge in the Company of which my husband's father, Thomas Jefferson McQhee was first Lieutenant.

In their efforts to make Grandfather tell where his sons were, these Indians burned the bottoms of his feet with a hot Dutch oven lid and cut his toes up through his toe nails but with no success. They killed our cows and as they left the house, at the spring about a hundred yards from the house they met

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my mother and her nephew, Andy Trout, who were returning from carrying fresh food and water to Van, George and Dan who were in hiding near. These Pin Indians wore only the breech-clout and had their bodies painted hideously. They stopped my mother and Andy who, while larger than my mother, was younger than she, and tried to make them tell where the boys were and after failing they put ropes around their necks and first threw the rope over the limb of an old burr oak tree that is still standing and drew my mother up in this way twice and when they could not make her tell, one of them held her while they drew the boy up the same way either four or five times and after each time would try to force them to tell and the last time they drew Andy up, he fell when they lowered him.

Fortunately for my mother and Andy some soldiers were heard approaching so the Indians mounted their horses and left hurriedly. This was the last raid of

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the Pin Indians there for a long time though they still continued in a small way to steal cattle and to destroy anything that they could.

Grandmother would hide the girls whenever she saw these Indians coming. At another time, Van, George and Jim Ward together with several more of the boys who were hiding from the Pins in caves came through a back way from their hiding place into a large cave and met a number of the girls in the neighborhood for a dance in the cave. This cave is on Honey Creek four miles south of Dodge, I know of no name for it except the Honey Creek Cave. My mother was stationed near the mouth as the lookout and Mary Wickett played the violin for the dancing. During the dance, a party of Pins heard the music and came in but Mother had given the signal and all of the boys had left by the rear and the Pins found only women there when they came and as they were towards and afraid, they would not follow very far

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back in the cave so left without any results.

Two of these boys, Sam and Jim, were afterwards killed by the Pina about fifty miles south of home and those who were with them were afraid to even try to get their bodies and the wolves ate the flesh from their bones. As soon as they could, their comrades gathered up the bones and buried them in one grave near where they were killed. Ward made it back home.

Grandfather always expected an arrow between the shoulders. He survived the war but was killed after its close by his son-in-law, Zeke Miller.

Jack Rogers was a friend of Grandfather and while they were not related they looked much alike.

Tom Scraper killed Jack Rogers on the Missouri-Oklahoma State line near Southwest City. After he had killed him he cut out his heart and put the heart on his spear and holding the spear, danced on the body of Rogers.

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At another time my grandfather and father were met near Southwest City by the Pina and they took Grandfather's clothes and pony from him, and father ran away.

The people here went to Salina for their salt. A party of seven women including Mary Wickett, Sallie Ann Mitchell, Louise Trout, my grandmother and others, one of whom had a small baby, started to Salina, driving an ox to a two wheeled cart and in the hills heard the Pina approaching. They struck the ox sharply and sent him in a run down hill, where the cart straddled a tree and stopped and the women hid quickly in the brush and woods. The Indians looked for the people after seeing the cart but when they were unable to find them, with a whoop they were gone. My aunt, Amanda Ward Woods, was bitten on the big toe by a civet cat while in hiding at this time. After the women were sure the Indians were gone, they rescued their ox, righted their cart and went on their way. This trip took from ten days to

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two weeks for the traveling was slow in addition to having to boil, and make their salt in the huge iron kettles provided for that purpose.

Grim necessity forced the people to resort to many things for self-preservation. Even the women were at times forced to kill cows for food. This they did by tying the cow by the horns and drawing the rope and pulling the cow to a tree where the rope was pulled tight. Then the cow was stabbed or its throat was cut. The women being unable to skin it, they cut out chunks of flesh as best they could.

The Home.

The foregoing events took place at the old Van Ward place which is about eight miles south and east of Grove.

I was born October 10, 1875, and attended school at the old log schoolhouse at Cave Springs and afterwards at Olympia.

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The old home on the Van Ward place was a two-story double log four-room house with a fireplace in each end. The logs were hewed and never painted. In addition to this there was a log room in the yard with a fireplace where we cooked in the summer, the water coming from the big spring at the foot of the hill under big trees.

In the sitting room was grandmother's loom and on the other side of the room was her spinning wheel, where on the long winter days the thread was made and the cloth woven that was to supply the home and make our clothes. I can card and make the thread but Mother and Grandmother twisted the thread.

We raised our own cotton and Daddy had over a hundred ewes. After Mother selected the cotton and the wool that was needed for the family use, my parents would take the balance and sell it and the wool was taken to Neosho, Missouri, the nearest wool

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market and the cotton to the gin at Wagoner. They would be gone several days on these trips and would bring home a supply of groceries and other needed things. Well I remember my first store bought dress. Mother bought enough for my sister who was eight and for me, aged ten at that time. It was brown wool with a yellow leaf in it that looked like a tobacco leaf.

My only brother, Richard Fields, still lives near but the rest live elsewhere. Clarice Smith lives east of Vinita, Emma Mount at Grove, and Cora Thurlow near Maysville.

Later my father married Linnie Marshall, a white woman, and I have a half sister, Inez, and three half brothers, William, Jim and John.

Marriage.

On Friday, the 13th of February, 1891, I was married by Thomas Jefferson McGhee at Dodge to his

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son, Samuel Bert McGhee, who was a graduate of the Cherokee Male Seminary. He was born February 5, 1872, where the town of Dodge was started by his father.

My husband and I came to the present Ottawa County and located three miles north of Little Timbered Hill which is between Miami and Welch. We bought a claim from Mae Campbell on which there was a four-room frame house built entirely of cottonwood lumber and which had cottonwood weather boards. The shingles were clapboards, and here we began to make us a home, cutting sprouts, clearing, breaking the sod, etc.. With us when we moved here came my husband's younger brother, Thomas Jefferson McGhee, Jr., who while too young to care much for farming was company for me and taught me to shoot, and together we three hunted, fished, rode the prairies, killed coyotes, and worked. In fact, those were the happiest days of our lives. The nearest woman was twelve miles ^{away} and our

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nearest post office was Chetopa, Kansas. At that time there was one general store at Welch.

We remained here four years and returned to Dodge and lived on my husband's father's place and my husband taught school at Cave Springs.

In 1899, we moved back and this time located on Little Timber Hill. There was a bunch of negroes living east of the hill. Their name was Harris. Bill Harris had settled on a part of our land and Alex Harris on T. J. McGhee, Jr.'s, land. We were seven years getting possession of this land; the government assisted us and at different times sent officers to see these negroes and gave our men permission to carry guns. This finally led to a fight when T. J. was attempting to fence a part of his land, and Alex struck T. J. with a post over the head and one of our men struck one of the negroes between the shoulders with an ax. The negroes left immediately after this.

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Later my husband opened a general store at Dawes and sold everything even to cider.

These were happy days for the three brothers had allotted themselves and their families on and around the hill and had succeeded in getting the McGhee Cherokee National School established which was used for both school and church. Each of the brothers, S. B., J. M. and T. J., Jr. built ^{for} himself a comfortable home and each had a good spring near his house.

I stayed in the store much of the time for my husband was running cattle here for Bill Farmer, a white man, sometimes having as many as four thousand head on the range.

Here our children were born, they are: Bertie, Beuna, Richard, Irene, and Imogene.

In 1915 we traded for a general store in Afton and moved there, where we remained for six years and at the end of that time, we sold there and came to Miami, where my husband died on July 15, 1930.