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BRAY, W. W.

SECOND INTERVIEW

7276

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

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BRAY, W. W. SECOND INTERVIEW 7276

Field Worker's name Carl Sherwood

This report made on (date) August 23, 1937

1. Name W. W. Bray

2. Post Office Address Weleetka, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 4

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Carl Sherwood,
Interviewer,
August 23, 1937.

An Interview with W. W. Bray,
Weleetka, Oklahoma.

This great south land which I roamed in my boyhood days was the former home of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians. It was a woodland country splendidly watered with springs everywhere, some with medicinal properties. The Indian springs in Butts County, Georgia, is where Chief William McIntosh of the Creeks was killed because he sold his nation to the Federal Government without the consent of his subjects. The nation as we call it was bountifully supplied with deer, bear, turkey and other small game, with fish, ducks and geese in abundance. No wonder the Indians were reluctant to leave such a favored land. The old Nation was doubly dear to them because it was the home of their childhood days and held the sacred ashes of their dead. The honeysuckle, wild crabapple and Magnolia bloomed in wild profusion. Their blended perfume would intoxicate you with delight.

Little did I dream that I would some day be identified with the Indian people in their prairie home. This new country

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was a prairie country, like of which I have never dreamed. It was an Indian domain situated between the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers. It belonged to the Creek Indians and was one vast ocean of green grass. The grass grew from kneehigh to as high as a man's head on a small pony and was called the Blue-stem grass. It was not burned off until spring and was food and shelter for livestock of all kinds.

The soil in this country was second to none but it has now gone down the creek and rivers. Call this civilization if you want to, but civilization has destroyed some things that can never be replaced. Had the Federal Government dealt with the Creeks as they did with the Osages, the Creeks would have been well fixed today. The Osage children have homes of their own and will have as long as the Federal Government safeguards their interests. The Creek children who were born after the allotment have no homes of their own; neither did they participate in the division of money held by the Federal Government. Yet they had the richest heritage that I have ever known any

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Nation to have had. The old Creek Nation as I knew it in the long ago will be forever photographed upon my memory for it was here that I formed the ties of friendship and ties of kinship that nothing but death can sever.

We had deer, wild turkey and prairie chicken in abundance. The streams were filled with fish but the oil wells have destroyed many of them. Good roads and good schools are the greatest achievements.

Having been identified with the Creek people for fifty years I am prepared to state that they were the friendliest, best people I ever knew. They are a primitive people. Their wants are few and easily satisfied. When the men went out on a chase for wild game, they only killed what they needed and left the rest to grow and multiply. They were very different to "Buffalo Bill" and his wholesale slaughtering.

The old people among the Creeks were religious. I have seen barefoot women go up to the altar and give their last cent of egg money for missionary purposes. The Indian, as a rule, was not as loud in religious expression as some

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white people, but the Indian's soul has always cried for some object of adoration. The moment that thought unfolded itself into consciousness, the spirit of religion came to light. I have seen some of the old Indians who did not seem to take any interest in the meetings, all stand with their heads uncovered and look up to the heavens and worship the Great Unseen in speechless adoration. I recall an expression from a good brother at a meeting once; he said, "What I am and what I have belong to God".

After I was here three years I met a lovely girl; she was as shy as an antelope. Delilah, as I knew her, a noble Indian woman, is the crowning work of God's great creation. We were married in May, 1881, and we lived near the old High Spring Courthouse; it is an historic place shaded by grand old elm trees, that can hardly be surpassed anywhere in the western world. It was here that the old Creek Chieftains met once a year, together with their kings and warriors, to enact laws for their people and to smoke the pipe of peace and commune with one another over the sad tragic past.