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Cherokee Outlet
Hunting
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Opening-1889
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Cheyenne Indians
Opening Cherokee Strip
Government Springs

Field Worker: Elizabeth L. Duncan
June 11, 1937.

Interview with Samuel Henry Brooke
Medford, Okla.

Born September 9, 1863,
Sullivan, Moultray Co., Ill.

Parents Charles W. Brook, father,
Richmond, V. A.
Rachel Ray, mother,
Chillicothe, Ohio.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mr. Charles W. Brooke, the father of Samuel Henry, was a blacksmith at Chillicothe, Missouri for a time; then moved to Illinois and lived there with his family for thirty-one years; and from there, he moved with his family to Freeport, Harper County, Kansas, in 1885 and lived there until his death.

Samuel Henry Brook preceded his parents in coming to Kansas by one year. He became acquainted with a number of young men that fall. He was asked to go along on a hunting trip down in the Glass Mountains of Oklahoma. The members of the hunting expedition were

Dr. Bell, Dr. Booth, F. W. Simpson, Francis Moore, and Mr. Brooks. They rigged up a camping outfit in a wagon and came on down to Kiowa, Kansas, and proceeded on south on the Old Cantonment Trail into Oklahoma. They stopped in at the Old T-5 Ranch, then owned by the Grever boys, to hunt deer. The first day out, Dr. Simpson took Mr. Brooke out with him, taking the southeasterly direction, while two of the others went west, Dr. Booth staying at the camp to do the cooking. Before leaving camp, it was made up between the others to rig up a dummy Indian to scare Mr. Brooke. They called him a tenderfoot, which he was, for he was from the East and knew nothing about this country. They hunted all day but found nothing, and as it began to get late, Dr. Simpson said they had better start back to camp as they didn't know what they might run into. They accordingly started back, and they were nearing camp about dusk. Dr. Simpson was in the lead but he knew what to look for. Dr. Booth had stretched a wire from one tree to another and fastened this dummy to this wire so it could be pulled along as

though it were walking. Dr. Booth had put his Prince Albert coat on this dummy. When he came in sight of it, Dr. Simpson stopped all of a sudden, and Mr. Brooke, who was in the rear bumped into him. Mr. Brooke asked what he was seeing, and Dr. Simpson said "My God! There is an Indian. What are we going to do?" Mr. Brooke said, "I know what I am going to do." He dropped to his knee and shot three times at the supposed Indian with a 45-Winchester shot gun. Of the shots fired, one pierced the abdomen, the other through the arm, and one scraped its back, yet the "Indian" never fell. After the third shot was fired Mr. Brook began to get frightened; but soon after the third shot the boys began to yell, and when Mr. Brooke came into the camp the boys joked him mercilessly. They spent three days there hunting. After the third day, they moved on south twenty miles, still on the Weaver Ranch also south of the Cimarron River. There were lots of deer and turkeys. Mr. Brooke killed one deer and five turkeys. All together killed five deer

and fourteen turkeys. Mr. Brooke and his companions were gone nine days altogether. This was Mr. Brooke's hunting trip, for the first time, in Oklahoma.

On Mr. Brooke's second hunting trip, there were eight men in all that went. He remembers John Singer, a Mr. Brand, and Bill Nelson, but he cannot recall the names of the others. They came down here on the Weaver Boys' Ranch and camped six miles east of the main ranch house. On the second morning Mr. Brooke got up and saw that one of the mules was gone, so he started out to look for it. He followed the fence leading along the side of one of the pastures. He rode all day and about sundown he found one of the gates he remembered passing through on one of the other hunting trips. There was a station cabin located near there (station cabins were strung all around on the ranch for the boys that rode the fence), but before reaching this cabin which was down in a draw some distance he came upon a pack of timber wolves fighting among themselves. As soon as he saw them he circled out around them, making his horse

run at break-neck speed to get to the barn, for the wolves had seen him by that time. He did make the barn in time before the wolves surrounded the barn. The man at the station house heard them and began to shoot at them, scaring them off. He stayed all night there, and Mr. Brooke asked if he had seen his mule. The man told him he was out riding the fence when he saw the mule and recognized it, so had caught it and brought it back with him.

On April 22, 1889, Mr. Brooke came down in here with four other men when Old Oklahoma was opened for homesteading. He drove a four-horse team and spring wagon, and had with him also his saddle horse. The men that made the run were Grant Smith, Orlando Ray, Abe Yaunt and Jim Smith. Grant Smith staked his claim six miles east of Dover; Abe Yaunt staked two miles north of Kingfisher, and the other two men were unsuccessful. When they found they could not find a place to stake, they followed the Chisholm Trail back until they reached

Grant Smith's place, where ^{they camped} for three weeks before going back to Kansas. While they camped there, they hunted wild hogs, deer, and turkey, but Mr. Brooke killed just one wild turkey at that time, in the fork of the Cimarron and Turkey Creek, right west of Dover.

Mr. Brown, a man that staked his claim close to Grant Smith's, also shared the camp with Mr. Brooke and the others. Returning from a hunting trip in the evening, he had to pass under a jack oak tree, which was close by, to reach camp. In this tree, a rattlesnake master had hid himself: Upon seeing Mr. Brown, the snake waited until he came closer then struck, but missed. Mr. Brown, being quick on-the-draw, killed the snake. These snakes would climb up trees and wait for any passing prey, and when they would strike, they would wrap themselves around their prey and gradually squeeze it to death.

After some three ~~weeks~~, the visitors returned to Kansas, and Mr. Brooke returned to the farm. His crops were mostly corn and wheat. They were good because they had plenty of rainfall.

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On April 19, 1895, at the opening of the Cheyenne country, Mr. Brooke came down with three other men who were going to make the run. Mr. Brooke just came along to drive the wagon. He also had his saddle horse along. The three men were Charlie Holland, E. T. Brooke and Jim Shaw. They had to go to Watonga to make the run. While on the way, they shot at many antelopes.

The night before the opening, they camped right on the line, close to the Cimarron River. About a hundred yards to the south of them a band of negroes, about five hundred in all, were holding services and were singing. The boys thought they would go over to hear them. Upon reaching the tent, they saw only a bunch of seats in the middle of the tent, so they went in and sat down but it was so very hot they were unable to stand the odor from the negroes' bodies and they decided to go back to camp and get some sleep. The next morning they were up bright and early, but the negroes were up too, also ready to make the run. When the time came for them to start, the negroes all started out on foot, for not a one of them had a horse or

buggy, but they were swift on foot and they staked claims where the others had no chance.

E. T. Brooke, Jim Shaw and Charlie Holland were unsuccessful. After they looked around some and found they could not get a claim, they started back, camping south of Katonga on the east side of the North Canadian, but before camping for the night, they came upon an old Indian squaw out in the river washing. The old Chief was sitting on the bank watching her. Upon seeing Mr. Brooke's companions and himself, he came out to stop them and asked them if they had any "fire water," Mr. Brooke told him they were not permitted to give him any, but he was very persistent. The boys camped near there before going on their way. The next morning when they were ready to go he was over to ask again for fire-water. Mr. Brooke had a gallon of alcohol with him, so before leaving camp he called the Indian over and poured out a tin cup three-fourths full and gave it to him. He drank it down just like water. Mr. Brooke bade the Indian and his squaw good-bye, but the old Chief could not say a word as the

alcohol almost took his breath away as it was so strong. Big tears were rolling down his cheeks.

Mr. Brooke and his companions went on, crossing the North Canadian. About a mile from there, he took his saddle horse and rode part way up the side of a small mountain, then he got off, tied his horse to a sapling, continued the climb on foot. He came upon a crevice in the ground some three feet wide and eight or ten feet deep. Looking down in there he saw all kinds of snakes bunched together, lying in the warm sun. Looking around to see what he could throw in on them, he began to pry around at some of the large rocks about. He found one about the size of an ordinary wash tub, rolled it up to the edge and pushed it off into the crevice, mashing them. He continued this rolling of rocks for an hour, until his companions began to yell at him to come on. They continued on their journey circling to the north. That night they camped close to Cheyenne camp, but yet at a distance.

There were some five hundred Indians in this camp. Mr. Shaw was scared to death. He wanted to go on and not camp close to them. He sat up all night, guarding his horses and wagon, but the Indians did not bother them. They continued on toward home, the next day, encountering a number of wolves, timber and grey wolves, also coyotes. They had attacked a team of horses that had strayed away from someone's camp. The wolves had one horse down and killed, and the other was down but still fighting. As soon as they could get out of their wagon they began shooting, driving them off. The one horse remaining was torn and crippled so badly that he could not get up. As soon as the poor animal saw the men, he began to neigh and whimper, begging them to help him. Mr. Brooks and his companions fixed up a sled and put him on it and took him with them. They camped that night at Walnut Grove. The horse rested that night and could stand on his feet the next morning. Mr. Brooke doctored him again that night

when they camped. The next day they continued on their way, reaching home that night. The boys gave the rescued horse to Mr. Brooke.

Mr. Brooke married three years before the opening of the Cherokee Strip. He registered at Cameron (now Manchester). The dust was ankle deep, as there had been no rain for a long time. Starting at twelve o'clock noon, on Saturday, September 16, 1893, he made the run in one hour and ten minutes, staking his claim five miles west and a half mile north of Meadford. Mr. Brooke started from where he did for the reason that he found a corner stone marking the mile. He varied one hundred yards to the east in thirteen miles; getting between the school land, he could vary a mile either way. He followed the sun, using it as his guide. He camped all night, using his saddle for a pillow. In the night he was awakened by his horse nibbling at his shirt sleeve. The horse had also straddled him. Mr. Brooke crawled out from under his horse, and looking up, he saw eight coyotes not four steps away.

He was so scared that he could not move, as he had no gun with him, so he eased around and said to his pony, "Kick, old boy, kick," He had taught the pony to kick at his command, so it started in kicking. That is the way he chased the coyotes away, but he did not go back to sleep. As soon as daylight came, he went to look for Mrs. Brooke, as she was to follow up with the wagon and supplies on the Chisholm Trail. He had told her to camp on Osage or go to Pond Creek, but night overtook her and she got to the trail and camped with some others that night so she would not be alone, Not knowing where Mr. Brooke was. But someone that knew Mr. Brooke had seen her and told her where he had staked his claim, so the next morning she drove over to where he was. The distance they were apart that night was that Mrs. Brooke had camped one mile north and a half mile east of where his claim was staked. They pitched their tent, built a camp fire, and had chicken for dinner as she

had brought some chickens. That night some more coyotes came to the camp, but this time Mr. Brooke had a rifle that he brought down in the wagon and he killed two out of six. Then on Monday, he got the plow out of the wagon and plowed a furrow around the place.

The Government gave each one a number by which to register. Four of the homesteaders sent a man down to Government Springs to let them know when their number was to come up. Mr. Brooke camped on his place a week, and then went back for more supplies to run them until he could register. Two months passed when they heard from this man at Government Springs, so a bunch went down together.

Mr. Brooke returned to his homestead, then to Freeport, Kansas, where he bought a house and moved it down. In the fall they built, hauling gyp rock from the state line to plaster. Then they dug a well where they thought would be good water, but it was so salty they could not use it so they had to haul water a distance of two miles for some time before digging another well which proved to be a good one. They also built a barn.

The things that were brought down when he came were a sod plow and some chickens, but before they brought all of their stuff, he had made quite a number of trips back and forth. The next spring he brought with him a binder, header, wheat drill, harrow, sulkey plow, two cows, sow and eight little pigs, household furniture, four dozen chickens, one dog, and one cat. They broke sod all summer up to June, and put out some sod corn but it would not grow; then they put out fifty acres of wheat. They harvested seventy-five bushels of corn. They hauled fifty bushels to Argonia, Kansas, and sold it for fifty-two cents a bushel. The following year they planted fifty acres of wheat, which made twenty-two bushels to the acre. In 1896, they planted wheat again and got a fair crop, and in 1897, they planted wheat again. The farmers were turning this country into a wheat country.

Mr. Brooke stayed on this place twelve years, sold it and bought Drew Ryan's old farm; lived there thirty years and then sold it to John Drennan, and now lives in town.
