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BULARD, SIDNEY ALONZO. • INTERVIEW

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

Field Worker's name Ethel V. Elder

This report made on (date) November 26, 1937

1. Name Sidney Alonzo Bullard

2. Post Office Address Waurika, Route 1, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Texas Community

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Mth. May Day 17 Year 1868

5. Place of birth Paris, Lamar County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Elijah Bullard Place of birth Illinois

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Frances Elizabeth Johnston Place of birth Tennessee

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 16.

Ethel V. Elder
Investigator
11-26-37

An interview with
Sidney Alonzo Bullard
Texas Community,
Waurika, Oklahoma.

I was born May 17, 1868, at Paris, Lamar County, Texas.

My father's name was Elijah Bullard; he was born in Illinois, died June, 1898, and was buried at Velma, Stephens County, now Oklahoma.

My mother's name was Frances Elizabeth Johnston, born in Marion County, Tennessee, died October 31, 1930, also buried at Velma.

I left home at the age of nineteen years, riding my favorite horse, heading for the Indian Territory to make my fortune. I crossed Red River at the Red River Station, forded the river, came on to the little place of Fleetwood, spent my first night there, went on and in the next day or two I came to Sallie and Bill Duncan's store three miles east and one mile north of the town of Duncan on the old Chisholm Trail.

This town was named for Sallie and Bill Duncan.

Then I went to the little place called Tuckers Post Office,

one mile west of the old Chisholm trail in what was the known as Pickens County. I went to work for Jim Pickens, who owned and operated a saw and grist mill and worked there about four months.

I then went to the Payne ranch, down on Wild Horse Creek, owned by John Fitzhugh, worked there a long time, then was transferred to Graham and Son, who owned the Diamond H. E. ranch on Bear Creek and worked for them as a cowboy for a long time.

In 1892 I decided I would go into business for myself so I went down on Caddo Creek to a little place called Fox and was there about one year. I bought my first herd of cattle, numbering a hundred head, and drove them to the nearest shipping point which was Purcell and sold them.

Cherokee Strip

This land was opened for the greatest run ever made. The President issued a proclamation declaring that all the lands of the Tonkawa and Pawnee reservations should be opened to settlement on a certain day in September, 1893. I mounted my horse, got ready for the run from Orlando to Red Rock. I "made it" and flagged my land and held it some time

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and then I gave it to a young man from Coffeyville, Kansas. This land I flagged was near the place you crossed the Arkansas River on the way to Wichita, Kansas.

Cheyenne-Arapaho Run

The President issued a proclamation that the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands would be opened to settlement some time about the middle of April, 1892. Great crowds began to gather along the border a few days before the time set and when the soldiers fired their guns and gave the signal to go, I guess there were about twenty thousand people or more who ran across the line racing for homes.

I made my run and flagged a place on Elm Creek. I stayed there about two months, maybe longer and helped to organize a post office which we called Cordell. I gave that claim away and then I came to the Indian Territory to the little place of McGie in Stephens County.

I was in the cattle business then for a long time, then disposed of all my cattle and came down close to Red River and bought this place of one hundred sixty acres of land where I now live.

Federal Commission Courts

In June, 1890, the Federal Commission Courts were opened at Ardmore, Purcell, Chickasha and Duncan. There were no courts closer than Graham in the Chickasaw Nation, and there was a Federal Court at Paris, Texas.

Cattle Permits.

All cattle men had to pay what we called permits to hold, handle and sell cattle; we had to pay \$5.00 per year for our permit. Harrison McClain was the collector and he was killed in 1897. Bill Bowles was put in his place as collector. Bill Bowles lived at a little place we called Coffee Pot down on Red River near the town of Leon.

Prominent Men

Some of the most prominent men whom I knew in the early days were Frank Jones, Jim Beaver, Melton Calvert, Joe Saddler and Bill Duncan.

Camp Meetings

Down on Owens Prairie there was a big meeting place and there was an annual meeting held sometimes for weeks at a time. Brother Silvey from Ardmore would come to hold the

camp meeting; (sometimes we called them protracted meetings and the people came for miles and miles around and camped and we would have the best times.

Brother Brad Hays and Brother J. J. Ward were our travelling missionaries and I heard them at Velma in 1890. They held meetings all over the country. They were two wonderful men of their day. Brother J. J. Ward is now pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church in Lunan.

Atoka Agreement

The agreements regarding the allotment of lands were made by the commission with all the tribes except the Cherokee; the agreement with the Choctaws and Chickasaws which was called the Atoka Agreement was signed on April 23, 1897. The agreement with the Seminoles, Creeks and Cherokees was not made until later.

The land was platted into townships in 1897 and the surveying was finished in 1899. The land was appraised at \$3.00 per acre up to surplus, sold to the highest bidder and the money was drawn out by annual payments.

All who wanted land had to go to Fort Sill and register.

Mattie Wolf drew the first claim in the run at Comanche in 1892, consisting of one hundred sixty acres.

Cattle Ranches

Two of the largest cattle ranches around here anywhere in the early days were owned by Bill Washington and the Suggs brothers down on Mud Creek about twenty miles east and two miles north of the place where ^{the} town of Waurika now stands. Suggs brothers headquarters was near the little town of Sugden, which was named for their father.

In the year 1886 John Price and Mr. Keith came to this country and my brother came, too, and they all settled around the little place of Addington.

Round Up

Every spring about June and July a representative from each of the large ranches would come with a bunch of their own cowboys and round up all the cattle from over the prairies. There were no fences around the ranches at that time and each bunch worked under a foreman and all the cattle that belonged to one man was cut out of the drove and then driven to their own ranch. The larger steers and cows were driven to the nearest shipping point and sold.

I branded cattle for the ranchers on the open prairies and branded all the little calves that had not been branded. I have also branded cattle for the Chickasaw and Choctaw Cattle Growers Association for a number of years.

There was always a chuck wagon gang who went with all the round-up bunch. They used a cracker type old fashioned coffee mill to grind the coffee with and that black coffee tasted good drunk from our old tin cans; they had a large old time Dutch oven about twenty inches across the top and all the kettles were very large and there were some big iron pots to cook in too. The water barrels were fastened on to the side of the wagons.

When we would have to sleep on the ground out in the open, we would use our blankets to cover with and put our saddles on the side of the wagon from which the wind was blowing. We slept with all our clothes and boots on and some times the snow would get so heavy that we would have to get up, shake the snow off and then try to go back to sleep.

We would have to haul salt out on the range; we would cut the big barrels half in two and bury them in

the ground to keep the cattle from tearing up the barrels and wasting the salt. We would hitch up about twenty mules at a time to several wagons and go to Melcherville and haul as many as thirty barrels at one time for the different cattlemen.

Dawes Commission

In 1893 Congress provided for the appointment of three commissioners to meet with some of the Indians from the Five Civilized Tribes and try to get them to give up their ownership and allow each tribal member to have his own homestead and also to try to get the Indians to give their consent to let Indian Territory become a state and join the union.

Mr. Henry L. Dawes from Massachusetts was the first chairman and that body of men was named the Dawes Commission after him. Green McCurtain was the Governor of the Choctaw Nation and Governor Johnston of the Chickasaw Nation at that time.

Missionary Schools

The first school I remember anything about was a Catholic school built of stone, called "Sacred Heart"

financed by the churches . Indians, whites and negroes all went to the same school.

There was another school which was the first inland school built at the little place of Loco, Stephens County, which was a five months school and a tuition school. One dollar per month was paid for the tuition of each child. I have paid the tuition of several of the little kids in the community who could not afford to go to school. The teacher taught what we called the Analysis or Black-board System. In the Summer the Business school was taught in the same building.

The first regular Business College I remember was built at Ardmore.

Banks

The first bank I can remember in this country was built in 1891 at the town of Cornish, with a capital of \$15,000. Jess Robinson and a man named Mutter were the first stockholders and a Mr. McClusky was the first President of the bank. This bank operated at Cornish for over fifteen years and then was moved to Ringling.

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The cashier of this bank shot and killed an Indian in the bank one day; this Indian forced him to cash a check for him that was not good and as the Indian was leaving the bank the cashier shot him.

United States Marshals

Bob Nester and Mount Morris were United States Marshals and Judge Jim Parker was the judge at Fort Smith, Arkansas.

Outlaws

Bill Walton, a notorious bank robber, was killed in Carter County trying to rob a bank. I remember Scar Face Jim, Belle Starr, Pony Creek, Bert Caisey and a Choctaw Indian Girl named Hoyatt, also Pearl Starr, daughter of Belle Starr who ran a rooming house in South McAlester. Pearl Starr was thrown from a horse one time and had to have her arm amputated and my father amputated it for her.

Patsy Hall was another well known woman; she married four men and gave each a title to hold land just the same as any Indian, she was a full-blood.

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Horse Races

One of the biggest horse racers of the day was George Guinn; he was also one of the biggest gamblers, he would bet from \$400.00 to \$500.00 in one pot, then when he would lose a grand fist fight would take place.

Another gambler was named Hope Joy.

The race tracks were long straight tracks from one quarter to three quarters of a mile.

Ferry Boats

There was a crossing down on Red River called Frog Crossing. Dutch Jones operated a ferryboat across the river here. Yellow Bank Crossing was another ferryboat crossing up the river close to Gainsville, Texas.

Furs and Hides

The Indians were very industrious in their fur trading and always managed to get hold of all the beaver hides and otter hides and sell them.

Indian Police.

The only Indian Police that I can remember was named Lam Alexander; he was stationed in Stephens County.

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Trails

There was a trail called the Emigrant Trail leading to the Custer Trail which started at Red River and crossed through my place where I now live, on to Fort Sill and was supposed to be a branch of the old Chisholm Trail. Indians would come through Waurika with their pack horses loaded or hitched to two poles used for carrying their luggage and some times the women would be riding on the luggage and some of the women would be on horseback.

Rodeos

In 1898 at the little town of Sugden we would have roping contests and Ward Seis would sometimes win first prize, Hick Harrison and Lige Perry were also good ropers; one of them would win first prize sometimes.

Epidemics

In 1890 la grippe raged very severely for some time, taking away people by the scores and the doctors could not do very much to check it. Then in 1896, down at Stratford in Garvin County near the Canadian River, meningitis began to rage and many, many people were again taken; this disease was very hard for the doctors to handle.

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In 1894 and 1896 a very deadly disease struck the cattle and horses, called then the blind staggers; today I believe we call it sleeping sickness and the stock died by the wholesale as nothing seemed to save them. I have been a veterinary surgeon for over forty-two years and I have never experienced any thing like that epidemic in 1894 and 1896.

Carnivals

We had what we called a Peanut Carnival up east of Duncan which sometimes lasted for several days and sometimes for a week or two.

The Comanche Indians would come down and camp maybe a hundred in one bunch; they would put up their tepees all over the place. They were very interested in learning to plant the peanuts and in the many ways in which peanuts could be used. The motive of the Peanut Carnival was to try to teach the Indian the many uses of peanuts.

POST OFFICE

There was at one time a post office at the little town of Claypool and the first postmaster was named Brisco.

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Ox Teams

I used to work for a man who had some ox teams for us to do the plowing and other heavy work of hauling with and one day I was plowing this yoke of oxen down in a marshy place and they got scared at something and started to run away. I tried to catch them and got the rope wound around my neck; they almost broke my neck before I could get loose so right there I quit that job of plowing with an ox team.

In the year 1890 I moved a very large boiler from the place where the compress now stands here in Waurika over to Hope. I was working a yoke of oxen and large black span of mules and it took several days to make the trip.

Cook Stoves

The first cook stove I can remember was in 1884 when my dad bought one for Mother and we were all scared to death of that thing as we knew it would blow up sure as the world.

We kids had the job of getting the wood and kindling up to use. I remember we piled the corner of the kitchen up with corn cobs about four or five feet high, and we "caught it" from Mother for making such a lot of dirt in the house.

Fires

We did not know what a match was and I never will forget the first ones I saw. We always started the fire with two flint rocks by striking them together to start a blaze and then we set an old stump in the yard afire to make the coals and this was kept burning all the time. That is how the old saying first started about coming after a coal of fire; maybe some one would let his stump of fire go out and would not have a flint rock to start another fire, so he would get a bucket and jump on a horse and away he would go to the nearest neighbor to borrow some coals of fire to start the old stump fire again.

When I was working on the Holt's ranch there was a young fellow who wanted to get married. He did not know just what to do, as everybody had to give bond to get the license, so all of us fellows donated 25 cents around to help him get married. Brother Tom Bigham married them and then that night a big dance was given and everybody came for miles and miles around. Sometimes we would dance all night.

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I was married to Minnie Burns in October, 1895. We lived at Fox for two years and I worked on a ranch for a man named McGee. We then moved to the farm owned by Highbarger brothers. I farmed a few years there, then went to Elmore and went into the cattle business with E. B. Perry. I worked for him awhile, then came to Waurika, where I now live.

My wife died here at Waurika and I kept the place and the children all together. Then in February, 1909, I was married again to Rose Grace and we are living at the same old homeplace.