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BUNGARVER, JAMES LOVE (Mrs.) INTERVIEW #12348

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

Field Worker's name Mary D. Dorward

This report made on (date) December 2, 1937

1. Name Mrs. James Love Bumgarner.
2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 250 Apache Avenue East.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 29 Year 1860
5. Place of birth Indian Territory

6. Name of Father John Ward. Place of birth Georgia
Other information about father Cherokee Indian

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Indian Terri-
tory.
Other information about mother Cherokee Indian.

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 8.

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Mary D. Dorward,
Investigator.
December 2, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. James Love Bumgarner
Pulsa, Oklahoma.
Born September 29, 1860
Father-John Ward.

Charlotte Ward Bumgarner was born in Coo-wee-scoo-wee district of the Cherokee Nation, at the Ward homestead along the Grand River about five and a half miles south of what is now the town of Fairland, September 29, 1860. The Ward family belonged to the deer clan of the Cherokee Nation.

My father was a son of Bryant Ward, who came to the Territory from Georgia in 1832, and settled along the Grand River near Fairland. Father was one of the biggest farmers in that region.

Our people were Southern sympathizers during the Civil War. My father ran a mule team from Kansas City to the Confederate Army in Indian Territory, carrying supplies to the army wherever it happened to be. One of the places I recall hearing him speak about was Cabin Creek where there was a

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battle. The Northern soldiers were so mean to the Southerners. They called us Bushwhackers, or Democrats. They would rob our houses, carry off or kill our stock, cut the teats off our cows, drag out our feather ticks, cut them open and just let the feathers fly. Once when I was a baby they took me away from my mother just to tantalize her. They gave me back unharmed, though. They would take our clothes, pile them all in a big heap and burn them. They finally burned our barn and tried to burn our house. After that, things got so hot that father gathered us all up and started for Mexico, along with a great many other Cherokees. We got only to the border, however, when father found he didn't like it, so we started back through Texas. We reached the Southern Civilized Tribes and there we camped for a while among the Chickasaws. We worked back towards home a little each year, but it took us until '66 to reach our old place. We had left in '61.

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When we reached our old home we found the house partly destroyed, great holes burned in the floor, and the barn completely gone. I didn't want to stay. We had been on the move for so long that I wanted to keep going.

After that trip to Mexico our own tribe would no longer admit us as members. They said that by going to Mexico we had rebelled and were disfranchised and they wanted to bar us from all participation in government affairs. There were of course thousands who had done the same thing as we did and all were disfranchised. We were rated as intruders and had to be readmitted into our own tribe again. The government sent a commission to negotiate with us and the commission said that if we would take back as citizens all the negroes who had been our slaves but who had by this time been freed by the War, and make them full fledged citizens with rights equal to every Cherokee, to draw land and money the same as full blood Cherokees, we could be readmitted to citizen-

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ship, provided we also took in the Delawares and Shawnees. Then in about '72 or '73 they took the Osage land away from us and gave it to the Osages, so there was not much left for the Cherokee themselves.

During the War the Ketoowahs took to the hills and did not take sides in the War. They have been in the hills ever since. They are the ones who say they have kept the sacred fire burning ever since they came from Georgia; though how they kept it from going out on the long journey here from Georgia is something I can't understand.

There used to be a trading post on the old Military Trail where it crossed Cabin Creek. It was kept by Tom Knight, full blood Cherokee. The trading post carried only trifles such as tobacco, candy, and a few notions. We didn't trade there. Father used to take a load of wool to Kansas and come back with supplies for a whole year. He used to take corn and wheat to mill and get it ground into meal or flour,

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and usually when he went to mill he would take a load for the neighbors and bring them back meal and flour also.

There was a stage stand near the trading post, but it was at the second crossing of the Military Trail on Cabin Creek, just about five miles west of our house.

In those days there was no railroad in the Territory at all. The I. K. & T. reached Chetopah, Kansas, about 1874, and I well remember when our father hitched up the mule team to the wagon and took us to Chetopah to see the train. It took us several days to get there and we camped at nights on the way. It was only in Chetopah and Southwest City, Missouri, that we could get wheat ground into flour for those two cities were the only ones anywhere near us that had flour mills. Father would always take a load for everyone in the neighborhood for very few people had wagons and teams.

The old salt well at Saline in Hayes County is

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believed to have been built by the Mormons. The original pipe is still there. It is a casing about ten inches square bored from a log; it isn't just pieces nailed together. The big iron kettles they used were about ten or twelve feet across.

There used to be a ferry across the Grand River called Cary's Ferry. It was about half way between Grove and Bernice. The first bridge across the Grand was built at Cary's Ferry. About eight or ten miles north of Cary's was Copeland's Ferry across the Grand enroute to Southwest City, Missouri.

"CHEROKEE CEREMONIALS"

Until the United States Court was established at Muskogee, if a white man wanted to marry an Indian woman he had to have nine Indian citizens sign a recommendation for a license; then he had to go to the Cherokee court clerk and get the license. If both were Indians no license was necessary. They simply went to the court clerk who put the marriage

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on record. There was no license, no certificate nor paper of any kind.

Indians of one tribe could go to the council of another tribe and if accepted could become a member of that tribe by adoption. I have relatives who got themselves adopted as Osages in order to share in the annuities from oil that the Osages receive.

I recall the stomp grounds, but there was no dance. There was^a conjuring pot in the center kept hot by the ever-burning coals. The conjuring man stood by this pot and each Indian filed past him and as they passed he put a kind of powder into the hand of each which they put into the fire. No one walked between the conjuring man and the pot, but each went around on the opposite side from the pot.

"ALLOTMENTS".

My allotment was in the middle of what is now Spavinaw Dam and is covered with water. The house

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stood just east of the spillway. My husband once had a water mill on the Spavinaw. He used to have a fish trap there and he would catch a wagon load of fish in it at one time.

The Grand River dam is to be two miles northwest of my husband's and children's allotments.

When we drew our Strip money we had about fifteen hundred dollars for all of us. I have a tumbler of Bohemian glass which has the date of the Strip Payment and the amount we drew.

My husband was James Love Bumgarner. He was a member of the Indian Police for about two years, sheriff of Saline District for two years, member of the National Cherokee Council for two years, and attended the last Cherokee Council, about 1900. He was the first postmaster at Chelsea, 1882-4, and first postmaster at Spavinaw, from 1886 to 1900.