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BULLER, MELLIE (Johnson)

INTERVIEW

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An Interview with Sallie (Johnson) Butler.
Big Cabin, Oklahoma.

By - James R. Carselowey, Field Worker.

August 18, 1937.

OLD INDIAN DAYS.

My name is Sallie (Johnson) Butler. I live at Big Cabin, Oklahoma, and since about 1895 have operated the Colonial Hotel at that place.

I was born on Ballard Creek, in Goingsnake District, January 1, 1861. My father's name was Joseph Cephas. My mother's name was Celia Woodall Cephas. I was the only child born to this union. My mother was first married to Dr. Andrew Emory, and to this union one child was born, named Kate, who married James M. Carselowey. Dr. Emory died a natural death, before the Civil War.

My grandfather's name was Thomas Woodall, and my grandmother's name was Nannie Tadpole Woodall. To this union nine children were born as follows: Robert, who married Quatie Landrum; Elizabeth, who never married; Margurite, who married, Alexander Sanders; John Scott; Hampton Williams; Marshal Wagnon and William Brown;

Iseac, who married Mary Carselowey, nee Daniels;
Jacob Houston; Annie Nee Daniels; Lucinda Woodall,
who married James Downing and ^{/later} Thompson Buzzard;
Abraham, who married Susannah Hendricks; Celia, who
married Dr. Andrew Emory and ^{/later} Joseph Cephas, and Thomas
Woodall, who married Annie Daniels.

My mother died when I was five months old,
and my sister Kate was eight years old. We then went
to live with our grandmother, Nannie (Tadpole) Woodall,
who was blind, and also a widow. This was in 1861,
the first year of the war, and the country was very
badly upset. The Pin Indians had become so bad, that
it was almost impossible for men folks to stay on the
place, with any degree of safety. They (The Pin In-
dians) had already killed one of my uncles, Abraham
Woodall. They just called him to the door, and a
bunch of men at the gate shot him down, just after
dark. They would not allow the men folks to make
trips into Arkansas after something to eat, under
threat of death. It got so bad that all the men folks

on the place left, and went into the Choctaw Nation, where most all the Southern sympathizers in our neighborhood went in order to be under the protection of the Southern Army, which had camped on the Red River in the Choctaw Nation.

This left my blind grandmother at home with myself and sister, Kate, to look after, but my aunt Margurite (Woodall) Brown, afterward known as "Aunt Peggy" came to live with us and she had six children making in all eight children and two adult people in our home, with only aunt Peggy and the children to make a living for the bunch, which she did for the period of the War.

It was a hard struggle. The men folks had left all of the hogs, cattle and horses at home but they had been driven off, until we only had one old span of oxen and a milk cow or two.

My aunt Peggy and one of her little boys had to take that old ox team and drive them all the way to Fort Gibson after groceries, and it took them almost a week

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to make the round trip. It was something like seventy-five miles, and right through the hills, and there were not many roads in those days. I don't know how my Aunt Peggy did it but she kept us all alive, until the War was over.

FRANK BROWN KILLED.

To make matters worse, a fullblood boy by the name of Sampson Sixkiller came to our place, one day and begged some apples. While eating them on the porch in company with my Aunt Peggy's son, Frank Brown, the Indian stuck a knife in Frank Brown's back and killed him. Frank lived long enough to tell us that the Indian had said, "You damn mean boy", and then stabbed him. We always thought he came over on purpose to kill the boy.

HOUSES BURNED.

When the war was over and our men folks returned home, Uncle Isaac Woodall's house had been burned, as was also my Aunt Peggy's. They put my Aunt Peggy out in one of the "nigger" shacks, where she lived for a few years, when she rented her a place and moved to herself.

MOVES TO DELAWARE DISTRICT.

In 1870 my sister, Kate Emory, married James M. Carselowey, a step-son of my uncle, Isaac Woodall, and the four of them moved to Delaware District, together with the three daughters of Isaac and Mary Woodall, namely, Annie, Susie and Jennie Woodall.

That left me again with my blind grandmother, with nothing to live on. We had another series of hard times. Aunt Peggy came back to live with us, and the Cherokee Nation passed a resolution, after the War to pay all of their blind and orphans fifteen dollars a year. That gave me and my grandmother thirty dollars a year to live on, but it went a long way, and we could buy a lot more those days for a dollar than we can now.

When my grandmother, Nannie (Tadpole) Woodall, died, I was fourteen years old. My uncle, Isaac Woodall, then living in Delaware District was my guardian and he came and got me, and took me home with him.

When it came time to leave Aunt Peggy I cried and "took on" so that one of Aunt Peggy's sons, one of the

Sanders boys came near getting in a fight with my uncle about it. Aunt Peggy wanted him to leave me with her, but he didn't like her and would not do so.

My grandmother willed Aunt Peggy her home place because she had done so much for us, and Uncle Jake and Isaac contested the will, but the will stood in court, just as my grandmother had made it.

ATTENDS SCHOOL AT ORPHAN ASYLUM.

When I had been in Delaware District one year, I was fifteen years old, and they sent me to school at the Cherokee Orphan Asylum, at Salina, . . . It was a fine school, with plenty of fine large shade trees, and a big spring near by. Reverend W. A. Duncan was the superintendent during the entire four years I was there. I finished in 1879.

During the four years I was in school at the Orphan Asylum all of the students took their turns at doing the work. A certain bunch would be assigned to duty for one week, during which time ^{they} would not attend school. Then another bunch would be assigned. There were so many

there that it took quite a while for our turns to come again.

They hired women in the neighborhood ^{/to} come there and do the washing; the school girls would do the ironing, and the boys did the farm work. Two hired hands were kept on the farm, but the boys had to help them, as they farmed several hundred acres. They kept a large herd of cattle and hogs and a lot of work mules on the farm, and the two hired hands were usually busy looking after the cattle. Dr. McNair was the school physician.

When I left the Orphan Asylum I went to live with my sister, Kate E. Carselowey, about ten miles southeast of Vinita, and lived with her until I married in 1881.

MARRIED ANDREW C. JOHNSON

On April 7, 1881, I was married to Andrew C. Johnson and to this union was born a son, who died in infancy, and Mayme, who married Dr. Felix M. Adams, the first superintendent of the Eastern Oklahoma Hospital, established by the state legislature, located at Vinita, and who is still serving in that capacity. (1937) My husband died in 1883, and I went back to live with my sister, Kate.

We had built us a home on Cabin Creek, one mile northwest of the "Hooley" Bell place, in Delaware District, and my husband had made fairly good improvements before he died. He served one term as sheriff of Delaware District. He had one brother, John, who married an Osage Indian who lived at Pawhuska.

My husband was a nephew of "Hooley" Bell, well known in Cherokee politics. He was working as foreman, on his uncle's place when I married him, and I can remember him getting six yoke of oxen from his uncle to break out the sod on our farm. "Hooley" had imported a lot of fine saddle horses, on his place about the time we were married, and my husband helped him look after them.

MARRIED TO JOHN E. BUTLER.

On August 17, 1887, I was married to John E. Butler, a Cherokee, who was teaching school at the Carselowey school. The school was established in 1885, and he was the first teacher, and taught there for five successive years. To this union two children were born, Cora, who died in infancy, and Lucian Bell Butler, who was married to Ruth

Day, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. W. A. Day.

John E. Butler was born on Honey Creek in Delaware District, Cherokee Nation, and was a graduate of the Male Seminary, at Tahlequah. He served several terms as a member of the National School Board at Tahlequah, and outside of the time spent there was teacher in the National Schools of the Cherokee Nation for forty-five years, and was working in that profession, when he was stricken with a stroke of paralysis while teaching near the present town of Vian, which stroke caused his death in 1920.

BACK IN GEORGIA.

My grandparents, and most of their children were born in Georgia, and came to the Indian Territory with the Eastern Emigrant Indians in 1838. I can remember my grandmother saying that the corn was about waist high, when they got orders to leave, and that the Georgia officials did not pay them anything for their crop, or anything else they had to leave. They were allowed just one wagon to take what one family were to bring and that was all.

She said some of the men folks wanted to slip back the first night they left and pull up the corn, but were afraid they would be put in the penitentiary, so did not go back.
