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BUTLER, ROBERT.

THIRD INTERVIEW

#12164 143 "

Investigator, Carl R. Sherwood,
November 15, 1937.

Interview with Robert Butler,
1024 Wood Street, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Wilson A. Bruton, a Cherokee Indian, was born in 1864 and was a son of Caswell Bruton, who was born near Spadra in Arkansas, where the Cherokees on their migration to the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi seem to have tarried.

He received his education in that locality and after reading medicine located at Clarksville, Arkansas. He held a membership in the Arkansas Medical Association and was a surgeon in General Stand Watie's regiment.

son of Wilson A.,
Wilson O. Bruton, who was a Cherokee of prominence, a native of Oklahoma and a leading business man of Muldrow, Sequoyah County, was a member of the Board of Control of the State Orphan's Home, and represents the third generation of a family which has been largely concerned in the development and good standing of his people.

Wilson O. Bruton played an important part in the final adjustment of the complications arising between the Cherokees and the United States Government in the allotment of lands. He

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was a lawyer by early training and profession and from 1891 to 1893 served as District Clerk and in 1903-04 was Executive Secretary to Chief Rogers. In that capacity he prepared the form of deeds to be issued to members of the Five Tribes, issuing the first deed ever delivered to a member of the Cherokee tribe.

Discovering that the expense of preparing and delivering the deeds to the Indians if delivered by the owners of the land would make too much expense on them and believing that this expense should be borne by the United States Government, he laid the matter before the Department of the Interior although it had been decided against his people.

Mr. Bruton was finally asked to make up his case and he prepared the brief which resulted in a reversal of the former Federal decision by which the United States Government became legally bound for all expenses incident to the preparation and delivery of the deeds to lands allotted.

W. A. Bruton, the father of Wilson O., married in Arkansas and the long and active period of his residence in the Cherokee country was spent in the old Sequoyah District between Fort Smith and Webber Falls. His wife was Miss Jane E.

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Chisholm, daughter of Thomas Chisholm, the last Chief of the Cherokees, who came to the new home of his people in 1838, the year when as a tribe and nation they took possession of their lands.

Mr. Chisholm was a prominent figure among the Cherokees until his death; his remains being buried near Mayesville, Arkansas.

Mrs. Bruton was twice married. Her first husband was Major J. B. Lynde, a Connecticut man. Dr. Bruton died in 1890 and his wife passed away on March 23rd of the next year. By her first marriage she was the mother of Carrie Breedlove of Muldrow and Wilson A. Lynde.

The boyhood of W. C. Bruton was passed in the vicinity of Muldrow and his education was obtained in the public schools of the Cherokee Nation, the High School of Tahlequah and the Lucas Private School of Fort Smith. After several years of reading law he reached his majority and was admitted to the Bar in Fort Smith and practiced both in Arkansas and in the Cherokee Courts.

From the time of the founding of the town of Muldrow in 1888, Mr. Bruton maintained his residence and office there and

only absent when official business called him elsewhere.

As a partner of Judge Littlejohn, he also opened the first law office in Sallisaw; his last regular practice being before the Dawes Commission in 1900. His suits in the Indian courts were largely Civil and involved the right of occupancy of real estate and the ownership of improvements. He was well qualified to assume the task of assisting in the settlement of the land between the Cherokees and the United States Government.

From 1888 to 1893 W.O. Bruton was also associated in selling merchandise with John W. Breedlove and in 1905 he engaged in the hardware business as a member of the Bruton Hardware Company. Two years later continuing in the same line under the style of Bruton Blackby and Goodman, he was one of the organizers and was president of the Citizens' Bank, the first bank of the kind in Muldrow.

Mr. Bruton played an important part in bringing about Statehood, was chairman of the County Committee for the election of 1907 which resulted in the success of every Democratic candidate on the ticket and has supported his party ever since.

In the Fall of 1908 he was defeated as a candidate for the Legislature as representative from LeFlore and Sequoyah Counties. In Territorial days, however, he had served as mayor of Muldrow for several terms and was a member of the Board of Education and in business, in law and public service was one of the leading citizens of Muldrow.

Note: (Robert Butler, who gave the foregoing information about the Bruton families, is an old settler who knew the family well. He is an educated man and well-informed as to Cherokee and Creek citizens and events occurring in those Nations. His information is from personal knowledge.)