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INDEX CARDS

Sawmills--Creek Nation
Moore, Napoleon
Ranching--Creek Nation
Roundups--Creek Nation
Outlaws--Creek Nation
Carr, Israel
Mercantile establishments--Creek Nation
Masons--Creek Nation
Okmulgee
Sapulpa
Trails
Law enforcement--Federal
Stage routes
Towns--Creek
Nuyaka
Chockie
Churches--Creek Nation
Outlaws--Cook Gang
Gunsmiths--Creek Nation
Outlaws--Starr, Belle
Intoxicants--Cherokee Nation
Ferries--Canadian River

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on 3-11-37

1. Name James M. ~~Co~~ Calhoun

2. Post Office Address Henryetta, Oklahoma Route 2

3. Residence address About three miles N.W. of North Canadia

4. Date of Birth 1871

5. Place of Birth Clark County, Alabama.

Name of Father James H Place of birth Macon Ga.

7. Name of Mother Mary J. Pritchett Place of birth Clay Co. Ala.

No. of sheets attached 4

Grace Kelley
Field Worker
-11-37

Thomas F. Meagher, Supervisor
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
Tulsa, Oklahoma

A SCOWBOY'S OUTLOOK "ED. LIT."
Interview
of
James M. Calhoun

In 1893 I was working for the Half Circle, O. Bar ranch we brought a trail herd to Bufaula and sold out to a Texas man named Brown.

I got a job with Lewis Norburg, at Bryant, June 1893. He had a contract with the Government, to furnish walnut gunstocks. The mill was on Little Red Creek, a little village, consisting of eight or ten families, commissary store, mill. Everything a person had to have to live. He moved the mill to Buck Eye Creek, 14 miles North and East of Okemah.

I went to work for Judge Napoleon Moore in 1894, the Lule shoe Cross ranch. President Cleveland was president then. Judge Moore established the Ruyak school.

Every year a crew from the ranch would take a chuck wagon and go to one of the neighboring ranches (if there were some stray cattle on our ranch, we'd go to that ranch and tell them so they could come and get them) and stay there until they had looked all over and gathered whatever of the cattle was their's, from that ranch, then go on to the next ranch.

Interview of J.M. Calhoun

page 2

Usually this roundup was in the spring but not always. We had to have them for there were no fences and the cattle could go ever so far. Ever ranch had their roundup but not always at the same time.

When we were on the "D.C." ranch, owned by Dave Carr the father of Israal Carr, Bill and Jim Cook, Cherokee Bill, Tulsa Jack, Skeeter (little fellow), Zonia (refugee from Ariz.)? rode with us. The Carr ranch was the headquarters for the Cook outlaws or Gang, it was at Youngtown, just south from Deepfork.

ISRALL CARR'S DEATH
and father's, too.

Old man, Dave, Carr was found on the trail, dead, and he had been shot through the head. He was a fullblood.

There was a white man living on Israal Carr's land. He was a farmer. One day he killed some of his own hogs and cleaned them and had them hanging up to cool. Israal Carr came by on his horse, put one of the hogs on his horse and took it home with him. I don't know why he did such a thing so boldly unless he thought the farmer was afraid of him. The white man went to Israal's house and brought it back to his house. Israal came back to get it again and the farmer shot him, Israal hadn't pulled his gun. I KNOW THIS IS THE TRUE STORY/ NOBODY BUT THE KILLER KNOWS WHO KILLED HIS FATHER.

Interview of J.M. Calhoun
page 3

62

The next ranch was the McDermitt, Circle Bar (O), on the North Canadian River, four miles East of Okemah. McDermitt had a store or trading post which was robbed by the Cook Gang 2 or 3 nights before we got there. Mr. McDermitt was a stone mason by trade and he did the stone work on the Eufaula bridge for the Katy Railroad. His name is on the Okmulgee Council House, too.

Okmulgee was our nearest trading post but there was no railroad there. We took corn there, ~~35~~ 25 or 30 miles, to get it ground into corn meal. That was our nearest grise mill.

Sapulpa was our nearest railroad town, Redfork nearest shipping town. The cow trail went to the McDermitt ranch, by the Nuyaka school, Ispahecha Stand on to Redfork.

We loaded the next day after the Redfork train robbery, 'twas the last train robbery to amount to much. I guess it was the Cook Gang, I wouldn't say for sure.

They were Cherokees(I have the History of the braking up of that gang if you want it)

I can remember the James Boys robbing the Fair Grounds of Fort Smith when I was a boy, and know all about Belle Starr. I think they already have that in the History though.

Grant Johnson, a Malatto negor, of Eufaula, was the best Marshall they ever had.

Baz Reeves was another negro Marshall, he rode for Judge Parker of Fort Smith. He was a negro police at Muskogee when he died.

he Fine Hughes, also under Parker, took Belle Starr 3 times.

Interview of J.M. Calhoun
page 4.

There was a Stage Coach trail that came from Muskogee to a noon stop. I can't remember the name, half way to Okmulgee, through Okmulgee on to the Sae and Fox Agency. It crossed Deep Fork at Slate Crossing then through the D.C. ranch.

Another was from Eufaula to Wetumka, Wewoka, Old Tecumseh to the Shawnee Agency.

The Choctaws had counties like we have now, some of our counties are named for the Choctaw name of the same counties.

The Creeks had Towns, and their divisions were usually from one creek to another instead of imaginary lines from one place to another.

Nuyaka was a Town on North Fork. Chōskie, means Post Oak, was where Haskell is now.

There was a Mission at Wetumka and an Alabama Church or Mission at Weleetka.

Bill Tiger of Weleetka is the nephew of Moti Tiger and he can help you a lot for he is an Indian who can talk English as well as Indian.

Barnhill is another Marshall and Cal Whitson. They were both good ones, too. Cal went to an Indian Meeting looking for some outlaws, and took his boy with him. The outlaws were on the lookout for them and killed his boy.

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES CALHOUN

FIELD WORKER GRACE KELLEY.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A PIONEER OF THE MUSKOGEE CREEK NATION.

JUDGE MOORE.

This happened before I came to this country but I had it from good authority and know it's true or he wouldn't have told me.

The Ispachecha War wasn't a real war but just skirmishes. After the so-called war Ispachecha ran for Chief and was defeated. That made him mad so he went to South Dakota, ^(a) and joined Sitting Bull. The United States authorized the Creek tribe to send delegates to South Dakota and bring him back. Judge Neopolitan Moore was one of the Delegates who went after him.

Several years Ispachecha was elected Chief of the Creek Nation.

Judge Moore was a fullblood, ^(b) born and reared and educated in Georgia. His wife was a white woman and a sister to Miss Alice Robertson. She has been dead for a year and half. They were great workers among the Indians. He died at the age of a hundred and four years old, ^(c) at Wagoner, Okla.

NOTES: a--Ispachecha went to Anadarko not South Dakota, and he had never heard of Sitting Bull.

b--Judge Moore's father was a white man.

c--This age is too great

Notes by Thomas F. Meagher, Supr.

2

He owned the Mule Shoe Cross ranch entirely, and had interest in two other ranches. One of them was the Half Moon. He and his sister owned it together. The Mule Shoe Cross ranch was right east of Okmulgee, where Morris is now.

McDERMIT POST

The McDermit was the nearest to the Old Wetumka Post. It was a private one, that is, it wasn't on any stage or Mail Route. And there wasn't a Post Office there.

COOK GANG.

Jim and Bill Cook were Cherokees. Jim's allotment was eight or ten miles east of Wagoner. Bill went to the Pen and I don't know for sure, but I think it was in Ohio. Parker sent most of them to that Pen in Ohio, the rest were sent to Fort Leavenworth.

Cherokee Bill was another of the gang but he was hung before allotment. Parker passed sentence. John Mallardon sprung the trap. He did all of the Fort Smith hanging until he went crazy and died in the insane asylum. George Mallardon was a business man in Fort Smith.

All the others were white men. A little fellow that was called Skeeter.

3

Tulsa Jack, later was killed at Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

Zonia was a refugee from Arizona. He belonged to the Al-Jennings Gang before Bud Ledbetter and Frank Jones broke it up. He was killed on the Younger Bend on the South Canadian River.

BREAKING UP OF THE COOK GANG IN 1894

During the Cherokee payment on the Cherokee Outlet money, they had a little hideout close at Tahlequah. They aimed to slip in and draw their money. I don't remember how much it was, but not much.

Barhill and Thomas were the two main Marshals who located them there, Of course there were others but I don't remember their names. The marshals surrounded the cabin, a log cabin with one door and window, where they were and waited till daylight. When it came daylight the marshals called for them to surrender, that they were surrounded. They refused and the fight started. During the fight the Cook Gang decided to make a get-away but as the door was heavily covered they had to climb out the window. Jim Cook was the first to get out the window. The Marshals shot him, with buck shot, and wounded him. He fell out in the

4

yard and lay there on his elbow pumping his Winchester at the Marshals. The others rushed out of the house and the Marshals scattered. The gang ran to ^{their} horses. Cherokee Bill and Bill Cook picked Jim up and put him behind Bill Cook.

They then had a running fight for the Marshals pursued them. But the Gang got away and hid Jim in a canyon on Grand River. Jim was shot pretty bad, some of his fingers were shot off, and he had to hobble with his gun for a crutch, at least he could hobble with it when they found him going down to the branch to wash his fingers. They took him to Fort Smith but they couldn't identify him as having been with the Cook Gang. Finding him by himself separated him from the Gang. The United States Authorities turned him over to the Cherokee Government who wanted the whole gang. The Cherokee Government convicted him and sent him to their penitentiary at Tahlequah. I don't know how long. He escaped and went on the scout until the Cherokee Tribunal laws were abolished. Then he came in and took his allotment a few miles east of Wagoner across the Cherokee line. He went straight and wouldn't even carry a gun.

In 1900 he bought a yearling from a negro who had stolen it from another negro. They were riding along, he was felling

a cigarette, next to him was the owner of the calf and next to him was the negro who had stolen the calf. The two negroes were quarreling about the calf when the middle man (owner) turned and shot Jim Cook and then tried to shoot the other negro but that shot went wild and he got away. The supposition was that he was afraid of Jim Cook because of his previous reputation and thought he would have a better chance by shooting him first than by shooting the negro first.

Jim Cook was at our house a few days before he was shot and I was in town when the negro was brought in, but I don't know his name or what they did do him, what disposition was made of the case.

Bill Cook: When the marshals were after them and they had to leave Jim Cook in the Cookston Hills, Bill went on into New Mexico and I suppose he would have gone into Mexico if they hadn't caught him. He was at a ranch, they brought him back and gave him forty-five years at Leavenworth. But he got fifteen years taken off after he was there. He jumped off a brick building into a pile of brick and killed himself.

I don't know what happened to the rest of the Gang.

The Cookston Hills were named for an old man who settled

there and not for the Cook Gang. There have been a lot of out-laws hide-outs in those hills but they used to be a great range and game country.

Lewis Norburg was a Fullblood Swede, ^a the guns were used in the Spanish American War and not in the World War, and the Philippean Islands. They were single "britch" loading guns ^(b) which we called Crack "Jogerson" Rifle. I'm not sure that is the correct name but I think it is.

One of the Grayson boys, I believe George, invented the Creek Alphabet. You can ask Bill Tiger when you see him.

Alex Posey was the Creek Poet, he died by drowning in the North Canadian River.

NOTES: a--Norburg cut all ^{the} walnut timber in the Creek Nation and sawed up into gunstocks.

b-- The guns were Krag-Jergensen bold-action 5-shot repeaters. By Thomas F. Meagher, Supr.

BELLE STARR

When Belle Starr was a young girl she heard some soldiers planning a surprise attack on the soldiers of her side. They took her prisoner and didn't turn her loose until they thought she was so far that she couldn't warn her people. But she knew

7

the country like a book so took a shortcut and got back in time to warn them and they weren't surprised. That was the beginning of her out-lawery.

Her first husband was an out-law named Jim Reed. He and ^abuddy started to Texas but there was a reward on Jim Reed's head. His buddy shot him for this reward but had to have him identified before he could claim the reward. So he sent word to Belle that her husband had been shot and to come and get him. On the way down there she decided that the buddy had shot him and she didn't want him to get the money, she knew whoever shot Jim would get a reward if she identified him. When she went in and looked at her husband she turned to this buddy and said, "This isn't my husband, Jim Reed, you have shot the wrong man", and walked out not shedding a tear.

Later she married the younger Sam Starr, called Little Sam. She had had two children by Jim Reed, a boy and a girl. She loved them as much as any mother could but raised them as tough as she was. Took them right along ^{with her} as soon as they were big enough.

Our home was across the river and about three and half

8

miles South of the Belle Starr home on the Younger Bend. The man who put her in her grave owned the land where we lived.

Tine Hughes took her into Fort Smith three times for horse stealing, cow thievery, robbing stores, depredations of all kind. She never did resist arrest but once when he took her, her men tried to kill him. Shot the reins off of his horse.

He pulled his gun and made her get between him and her men. She yelled at her men and told them to put up their guns.

Once when he was locking her up she took off her two guns and gave them to him and told him that she had intended to kill him with them but she knew of no other man she would rather turn over her guns to.

COURTS.

When they would have court at Fort Smith, it would last sometimes for twelve months at a time. They would get a different panel of jurors every six months. Witnesses from all over the Territory and adjoining states would come before this Federal Grand Jury. These witnesses would be questioned

to see what they knew about the person in question. That is called finding a True Bill. If the jury sees that there is cause enough they have a warrant issued for the person or out-law.

Mrs. Calhoun's cousin ran a saloon, at that time, in Fort Smith. Belle Starr usually wore men's clothing but when she went to town for whiskey she would dress up like a regular lady--two skirts with pockets, that didn't show all around. She would come in the saloon and take the veil off; then unbuckle her gun belt which had two guns in it. The saloon keeper would fill these pockets with pint and half pint bottles. She would buckle the gun belt over them, put the veil back on and walk out and nobody would think anything about it. If she had tried to take it across the line in any other way, the marshals would have picked her up, for they were very watchful for whiskey. They didn't want the Indians to have it. I don't know if she sold the whiskey, but we thought she was taking it to her men.

Once when she was in there, one of the marshals came in, and of course she thought he was looking for her, but he wasn't. She could have shot him before he knew she was there, she shot

10

out the lights and got away. That shows she wasn't as bad as people say.

Sam Starr was going into Fort Smith one night and she rode as far as the river, then turned and started home. A fellow had a grudge against her, hid in ambush and shot her when she came up. Frog Hoyt, who ran a ferry, was playing poker with another fellow, heard the shot and knew she had time to reach the place the shot came from. Her horse came running down to and across the ferry, and swam the river. Everyone knew her horse and her saddle had a red horn.

He hurried to where the shot came from and got there just as she drew her last breath. She had her Winchester in her hand but hadn't fired it. Nothing was done with the man who killed her.

She, or they, carried a winchester in a saddle holster which hung from the horn with the butt of the gun close to the hand. It had a round barrel which went under the stirrup leather.

She is buried on the home place there but her tombstone has had pieces chipped off by visitors until it is hardly recognizable. It may be all gone by this time.

11

Her boy was killed, shot, on one of their "trips".
Pearl may be living now, anyway she died a natural death if
she is dead.

Sam Starr went to a dance after she was killed, ^{and} he and
a man got into a drunken quarrel. They went out into the
yard to "shoot it out" ^{and} both were killed. There was quite
a bit of shooting on "Nerve" in those days. Two men would
get mad and go out and may-be one would get out alive but
this time they both got their man.

Hoyt Ferry, run by ~~Frag Hoyt~~ ^{was} three miles northwest of
the town of Hoyt.

Arbeca Ferry was exactly where the big Arbeca Bridge is
now.

Greenwood Ferry is still in use below the Arbeca. It
was the Ford and Ferry from Silver Springs to Linney.

Brassfield Ferry was on the South Canadian River just
above the mouth of the North Canadian.

There used to be a ferry at Rock Crossing, above Rock
Crossing. When you go from Ryal school to Crawford school
you have to leave the car and go across a footbridge. This
Footbridge is where the ferry was.

Dogtown wasn't a town at all. Just a bunch of people scattered through there. I guess you'd call it a settlement. I can't tell you anything for sure about it. Mr. Crawford who lives there now, has been sick all winter and I don't think he would be able to be bothered, I think he is still living though.

Oscar Blankenship lives down the river from the Crawford school, in sight from the school, but you can't take the car from this side. His wife's mother lives with him, she will talk. I think she is half Indian, pretty sure of it. If I were you I'd go to see her if you want to know about Dogtown.