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INDEX CARDS:

Outlaws  
Bucks  
Weleeka Mission

Buck Gang

An interview of Benton Callahan  
1/16 Creek, age 67, descendant  
of Cussetah Tribal town, (tulwa)  
Okemah, Oklahoma

Billie Byrd, Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History  
8-27-37

There lived lawless men during the Territorial days known as outlaws and such bands were known as Dalton, Cooks, etc. When the people of those days became victims of these gangs, some went down from the shots of outlaw revolvers and some lived through.

The outlaws were straight shooters and meant real business when they gave out commands, but sometimes they gave people no warning. They shot so straight as much as to even shoot a man's hat off of his head or even to shoot the tip of the ear of a person with the lead from their guns.

I have been amid and experienced some of their straight shooting on my ear from Buck's gang. In the summer of 1892, there arose a band of outlaws called Buck's gang. This band <sup>was</sup> composed of mixed

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negroes, Indians and half-breed? Rufus Buak, a Euchee-negro, was the leader of the gang. Lucky Davis, a negro, Sam Sampson, Creek of Cussetah tribal town, Neuma July, an Indian, and another Indian man whose identity I cannot fully establish.

This gang arose and terrorized the neighborhood of what is now Okemah, Henryetta, Okmulgee and near vicinity. This gang and their workings lasted only for about a week. This gang seemed to be the meanest and dirtiest band of outlaws that ever existed.

During their short reign they went as far as to rape an old woman and even a little girl. There were many other cruel deeds that they did.

On the day of August 4, 1892, I, with another companion were rounding up my cattle and getting prepared to drive off some of the cattle to the shipping place. I owned a ranch upon the Grave Creek which is northeast of Henryetta and near Morris. I guess I owned about two or three thousand cattle and the name of my ranch was U-Bar. I bought cattle from far and near at different places in Choctaw, Chickasha,

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Seminole Nations and other places.

My companion and I had started off with the cattle up along the Six Mile Creek when the Buck gang met us.

At first we didn't know who they were as they were coming toward us at a great speed. Bang Bang! went their guns and I saw my companion's horse fall, which the men had shot. Then I felt a hot piercing feeling in the tip of my left ear and when I saw the blood streaming down on my clothes, I knew they had touched off a part of my ear. That is why I say they are close shooters. Before my companion could make a getaway he was brought down by being shot in the shoulder.

Rufus Buck, the leader, told me, "If I had the boys kill you if I had known you."

So they just took my pair of boots and saddle and about a couple of dollars and rode off at a break neck speed towards the west.

There I was, a victim of the Buck gang, my

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companion lying in a pool of blood badly shot, cattle had stampeded in several directions, my companion's horse lay dead. I was barefooted and had some distance to go before I could get any help to get my man to a doctor. Finally, I managed to get a wagon, put some hay in the wagon, place a quilt on top of the hay and loaded the man into the wagon and started the trip to Checotah the nearest town.

Jord had already received Bill Gentry who was the United States Marshal at Checotah then. He sent out men to the scene but we were met on the way and so they took my man on into Checotah.

Rufus Buck knew me because when he went to school at Galaka Mission, my father, S. P. Callahan was superintendent of the school then. My father has said that while Rufus Buck was at school he was a mean boy. The saddle they stole from me was an Apache made saddle and I had bought that saddle for \$50.00 from another fellow who had won it in a poker game.

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Then the following day which was on August 5, 1892, the Norburg store well-known as Red Store was held up by the same gang. After driving at least twenty persons down the creek, blazing their heels with forty-fives, they came back to the store and took what they wanted and made off with it.

The following day, August 6, 1892, the Buck gang was captured by the civilians west of Okmulgee at a place called Flat Rock while they were at a poker game.

They were surrounded by the civilians and Neuman July made a getaway on foot. Neuma July on realizing that they were surrounded began to attempt to escape. Rufus Buck saw the act and knew that his own man would not stand by him, shot at the fleeing July but missed his shots. July escaped.

I was present at the trial of the Buck gang although I did not testify against them for they were tried on raping charges. I heard their testimonies of how each of them committed the crime and what manner as was stated by each one of them. This act

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was on an old woman and a little girl.

The Cook gang terrorized the country in the same manner. Bill and Jim Cook were fine fellows. They worked on a ranch before they became outlaws. I have met them personally as also Cherokee Bill who was a Cherokee-mulatto. I even met Henry Starr. In fact, Henry Starr and Jim Cook have helped me to get cattle across the Arkansas River many a time.