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CANNON, OSCAR. , INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Tioneer History Project for Oklahoma

CANNON, OSCAR.

INTERVIEW.

7350

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Field Worker's name Gus Hummingbird

This report made on (date) August 24, 1937

1. Name Oscar Cannon

2. Post Office Address Watts, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 14 Year 1866

5. Place of birth Dawson County, Georgia

6. Name of Father Irby Cannon Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Palmer Place of birth Georgia

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Field Worker, Gus Hummingbird,  
August 24, 1937.

Interview with Oscar Cannon,  
Batts, Oklahoma.

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Oscar Cannon, one-sixteenth Cherokee, was born in the state of Georgia, March 14, 1868. His parents were Irby Cannon, a white man, and Elizabeth Palmer, a Cherokee woman. The family came to the Cherokee Nation when Oscar was three years old. They settled on a small farm in what is now the Ballard community. The Cannons bought a claim from a man named McClure, near the Arkansas line.

#### Early Life.

Most of the early life of Cannon was spent on this small farm which the father of Cannon operated in the neighborhood. The farm consisted of about twenty-five acres at that time. The principal crops were corn, oats and wheat. Machinery was not known at that time. A few crude farm implements were to be found in this part of the Cherokee Nation. The family had a hard time for several years after coming to the Cherokee country.

## Education.

The earliest school in this part of the Goingsnake District was the Baptist Mission, which was located about three miles north of the present town of Westville. This was the school that the Cannon children attended. The grades taught in this school are not known for at that time they went by readers. Cannon finished the fifth grade which was a fair education for that time. Carrie Bushyhead, a Cherokee lady, was the teacher that he went to.

She later was married to a man named Qualls. This Baptist school was first established as a Denominational institution. Later it was a school. When the Cannon family first came to the Cherokee Nation there were a printing press, a wagon factory and tobacco factory at the Baptist Mission operated by a man named William Musgrove. I think the printing press was operated by a man named John Jones, a preacher, but the wagon and tobacco factories were operated by said Musgrove.

## Trading and Milling Points.

Cincinnati, Arkansas, was the early day trading and milling point for the Cherokees in this part of the country. Cincinnati was a small town. Siloam Springs was the largest

town in this part of the country, but most of the trading was done at Cincinnati. The early day traders at Cincinnati were two brothers, Bill and Bob Ray, Charley Cox and a man named Shields. J. Oats operated a wagon factory.

The mill was not at the place where it is now, but at that time was about a mile and a half south of the present day mill. The mill was located on what is called Moore's Creek. Two brothers named Moore operated this mill and Hans Moore also operated a store.

#### Old Timers.

Among the old timers who lived in the community around what is now Watts were Soldier Sixkiller, Tail Sixkiller, Redbird Sixkiller, Wash Lee, Mr. Lowery, Yellowhammer, Zeke Proctor, Sam Crittenden, Mose Crittenden and Old Lady Che-a-Euk-e.

#### Cattlemen.

Zeke Proctor was the only cattlemen in this part of the Cherokee Nation. He usually bought all the cattle of the Cherokees and then sold them to the white men from the other states who came to the Cherokee Nation to buy cattle. Zeke lived across the Illinois River from the

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place where Watts is now. He usually handled several hundred head of cattle.

#### Military Post Sites.

The old site of Fort Wayne is the only fort site in this part of the Cherokee Nation. This fort was on the Illinois River in the northeast part of the town of Watts. Oscar Cannon remembers the old powder house at this place.

#### Battlefields.

There are two battle grounds within two miles of this old fort. There was a battle fought just across the Ballard Creek on the south of Watts. Another battle was fought about a mile and a half south of Watts on Ballard Creek. This was a great battle. Bill Morton, a man who saw service in the battle of Ballard, told Cannon that the fort was commanded by a man named Anderson at that time.

#### Saw Mills.

The earliest sawmill in this part of the Cherokee Nation was operated by George Welch; this mill was on the Illinois River, east of what is now Watts. This mill sawed most of the lumber that was used in the construction of the Baptist Mission.

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At that time there was plenty of timber in the Cherokee Nation. About the same time when Welch operated the saw mill Wash Lee, a prominent man of his time, bought a thresher which was the first in the Cherokee Nation. This thresher was called the Innerless Chain Thresher. It was a horse-power outfit.

#### Politics.

For a long time the Cherokee people did not take much interest in politics. There were only two major parties in the Cherokee Nation, the National and the Downing Parties. Later, the Cherokees learned the game of politics and then they began to take interest. The qualifications of a voter was that he must be a natural born citizen, eighteen years of age, and a man. The whites were not allowed to vote. The first time Oscar Cannon voted was at Shiloh School about two miles southeast of where Westville is now. This was the voting precinct at that time. Politics ruined, just as it does anything else, the Cherokee Nation. After the politics played an important part in the affairs of the Cherokee Nation the Nation did not last very long.



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## Railroads.

The railroad question was important to the Cherokee people, especially to those who did not wish to have their land opened to settlement. This question was going to prove whether the United States was going to keep her treaty as it was made in 1866. The Council at that time consisted mostly of Mixed Bloods and Whites. They had already allowed two railroads in the Cherokee Nation but the Council ignored this treaty. The Cherokees are sometimes accused of accepting bribes from the railroads to allow them to come through the Cherokee country. The Kansas City Southern had been halted at Siloam for a year before the council allowed this company to extend its lines through the Cherokee Nation. Politics played an important part in this legislation.

## Allotment.

This was another law that was passed by the legislature of the Nation which was not approved by the Cherokees. Like the railroad law it was allowed by the Council. The Cherokees among the Fullbloods protested this law. This protest caused another election by popular vote to decide. In the following election several thousands of Cherokees did not vote. They

did not vote because they did not have any confidence in what the representatives of the United States Government had agreed to do in the former dealings. The Government of the United States had broken so many treaties with the Cherokees that they at that time did not have anything to do with this law. They were called the Night Hawks. These people not voting caused this law to be passed over the ones who were not in favor of it.