



BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

LOCKE, VICTOR M.      SECOND INTERVIEW      9379

Field Worker's name Amelia F. Harris,

This report made on (date) December 6, 1937.      1937

1. Name Colonel Victor M. Locke, Jr.

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 9th floor Petroleum Bldg.

4. DATE OF BIRTH:    Month March      Day 23      Year 1876

5. Place of birth Skullyville, Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation.

6. Name of Father V. M. Locke      Place of birth Kentucky

7. Name of Mother Susan Priscilla Locke place of birth Skullyville

Other information about mother Born in Indian Territory.

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 Six.

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Amelia F. Harris,  
Investigator,  
December 6, 1937.

Interview with Victor M. Locke, Jr.,  
Former Superintendent of the  
Five Civilized Tribes,  
9th Floor Petroleum Building,  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

My grandmother loved to talk about the old mission schools that she attended and about the missionaries who came out with the Indians, and to further impress upon me that her people, the Choctaws, have always advocated schools and churches. Granny spoke of the many hardships they endured in order to maintain schools. The Choctaws were so interested in educating their children that they took most of the money the Government paid them for lands and built churches and schools (this was back in Mississippi). Those who didn't have money gave livestock for this cause.

Then when the treaty was made to remove the Choctaws to Indian Territory, the Government agreed to build three school houses for the Choctaws; therefore, they had schools almost as soon as they had substantial homes,

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The beloved and loyal missionaries who had aided the Indians back in the old states in schools and church work, came west with their Indian friends, sharing their hardships. Some of the missionaries who made this sacrifice were: Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, Reverend Cyrus Byington, Reverend Alfred Wright, Reverend Ebenezer Hotchkins, and Reverend Loring S. Williams.

Reverend Hotchkins, Presbyterian, came with the Choctaws to the Indian Territory in 1832 and was stationed at Goodland in 1837.

The first log school house was built near Skullyville, which place derived its name from the Choctaw word "Iskule", meaning a dime or bit.

In 1832 Old Wheelock Mission was built near Wilburton. About 1840 there was a small boarding school for Choctaw boys at Norwalk, five miles north of Wheelock, which school was in operation about eight years. Reverend Alfred Wright was stationed at Wheelock and was buried near the school and church there.

In 1837 a mission school was established at Goodwater, with Reverend Ebenezer Hotchkins in charge. He remained

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here about five years.

From 1832 to 1840 there were several mission schools established. Pine Ridge School was established in 1835 with Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury superintendent. He was buried at Boggy Depot.

Reverend Cyrus Byington was superintendent of Female Seminary at Stockridge in the southeastern part of the Choctaw Nation.

Other schools were Bethabara, Clear Creek Bethel, Bok Tuklo, Lukfata; there was to be a school at Nunchwaga in Pushmataha County but it was difficult to get to Nunchwaga on account of high water and bad roads, so the school was never built, the funds being used to build Armstrong Academy.

The Presbyterian Mission board built a day school in 1849 at Goodland, with Reverend Starks and wife in charge.

There were more mission stations and a larger force of workers in the Choctaw Nation than any other part of the Indian Territory and most of these schools were mainly supported out of Choctaw National funds until the

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beginning of the Civil War at which time practically all were closed until after the war.

Some were discontinued, others were reopened and improved. Those reopened were Armstrong Academy, Spencer Academy for boys, New Hope Seminary, and Tuskahoma Seminary for girls.

Armstrong Academy was established about 1845 and was located in the southwestern part of the old Choctaw Nation. It was a tribal school, but started under the auspices of the Baptist Missionaries, who devoted their time to teach these children agriculture, carpentering, and blacksmithing as well as books.

~~Later the Presbyterian foreign mission took it over.~~

This school is still in operation and is maintained by Choctaw funds. I went to school here two years. "Granny" said all these missionaries learned to speak the Choctaw language, and they tried to teach the Choctaws to speak the English language.

All of the schools which were reopened after the Civil War were in operation until the past few years when

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they burned down and were never rebuilt. The only tribal schools that the Choctaws have now are Jones Academy at Hartshorne for boys, Wheelock Seminary for girls, at Millerton, and the Presbyterian day school at Goodland. The Federal Government has had to donate funds the past two years to maintain these tribal schools and has appropriated funds to send two hundred Indian children to Goodland school.

Reverend and Mrs. J. P. Gibbons, Presbyterian missionaries, came to the Indian Territory in 1830 to supervise the Goodland school; Reverend Gibbons has passed on but his good wife is still with the school.

A very historic spot, is the site of old Flint District Court House of Cherokee days which was a two story frame structure, located on old Sallisaw Creek, seven miles east of where the town of Stilwell now stands.

Many important trials, both criminal and civil, were held in this old court house and, if not just recently destroyed, the old forked tree to which the guilty ones were tied while receiving their punishments - so many lashes according to the offense, still stands near the court house.

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Another historic court house is located in a walnut grove, about one-half mile south of Highway 11 and near the little town of Rose, the Saline court house. This building was built during the 1870's and is still standing. The building is the last of three court houses which were built in the Old Saline District. Many people who visit this historic old landmark notice the striking similarity to the Mount Vernon Home of George Washington near Washington, D. C.

Near this old court house is a cold spring, one of the finest in the Oxark Mountains, which is covered over by a modern spring house. Indians would come here and camp during court during the early days.

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The Choctaws have a very historic council house at Tuskahoma, a two-story brick which was in a very dilapidated condition. Now the Government is rebuilding this building as a memorial for the Choctaws, and all the laborers, skilled and unskilled, are Choctaw men. Choctaws have bought one thousand acres around this building.

These improvements are to be finished by next May and for the grand opening we are planning to have the grandest celebration ever known in the history of the Indians.