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

Field Worker's name Leone Bryan

This report made on (date) May 17 193 7

At Mr. Gibson's Home

1. Name A. H. Gibson

2. Post Office Address 607 Grandview. Pawhuska, Okla.

3. Residence address (or location) same

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 23 Year 1860

5. Place of birth Salon, Iowa.

6. Name of Father Isaac T. Gibson Place of birth Zenia, Ohio

Other information about father Was a Quaker and came here through
President Grant's Church Indian Policy.

7. Name of Mother Anna Mary Hiatt Place of birth Milton, Ind.

Other information about mother Charity Williams, ancestor of mother

Richard Williams, Grandfather of Charity and Oliver Crosswell

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 12.

INTERVIEW WITH A. H. GIBSON

FIELD WORKER LEONE BRYAN.

May 17, 1937

My father was Osage Indian Agent at Drum Creek at the time of the "Dum Creek Treaty". It was at this time that the Osages sold their lands in Kansas to the Government. We moved first to Silver Lake, three miles south of Bartlesville. In 1873 we moved to Pawhuska. The Superintendent's house was only partly finished at that time.

In 1876 there was a water spout which caused the creeks to rise. There was a two hundred acre wheat field in the valley where the town now stands and it was covered with water. A carpenter who was working on the hill and unaware of the flood was stung by a scorpion. He was in such pain that he rushed to the doctor. But when he observed the flood he was so shocked that he immediately forgot the pain.

When I first came here, the only dwelling here was a triple log cabin built by trappers. We came here from Drum Creek in a Government ambulance. I was thirteen years old at the time. We moved in the house where the present Indian Agent resides.

All travel was by horse and buggy. The nearest railroad was at Coffeyville. The log cabins were located down at the foot of the hill near the present City Hall.

The center one was father's office and the shoe shop, at the right was the doctor's office and hospital. The doctor had his patients come to the office. The Indians were under the impression that if a small dose of medicine would help them that a full bottle would do more good. Of course this practice in some cases was disastrous and the practice of medicine was very unsuccessful until the doctor hit on the idea of having the Indians come to the office for each dose of medicine they received. The cabin at the left was the Government harness shop. There was one outer building that was the Government black-smith shop.

One of the first things put in was a Government saw mill, for a lumber supply. There they would saw off lengths and split into shingles. The log cabins had sawed wood floors.

(Mr. Gibson has a picture of the original cabins that were found on the Reservation when he came here).

Our first home was built of native stone. The furniture was shipped by rail to Coffeyville and was hauled in wagons to Pawhuska. We bought our furniture from the Abernathy Furniture Company located then at Leavenworth Kansas.

The fuel used in those days was wood. Our water was from

and springs. The water was strongly alkali and caused a great deal of illness until cisterns were built. The use of cistern water cut down the illness a great deal.

My first employment was Commissary Clerk at \$25.00 per month. There was a sub-station down at Mother Choteau's near the present site of Barnsdall. I would ride down there on my black pony and carry my rifle and issue rations to the people down there.

All of the Indians in the tribe were friends. In some of the log cabins over the country they cooked over the fire place; however we had a cook stove.

We made soup of coon, had roast 'possum, deer and quail were plentiful. I was some times treated by the Indians to jerked buffalo meat, tallow and wild potatoes.

When the Indians used to go on their buffalo hunts and the buffalo meat and the tallow was their chief food; their skins were smooth and glossy. But when they were barred from the plains and had to eat bacon as their chief food it brought sores and scrofula on their skin.

Big Chief was a personal friend who took a fatherly interest in me. One day he asked me if I wouldn't like to take a squaw.

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He said that he would pick her out. I asked him who he had in mind and he said his daughter. I knew it would not do to offend him so I said that I would see. In a few days he came back bringing his daughter with him. The girl was a very nice looking Osage girl. I knew it would not be politic to refuse point blank to marry his daughter, so I suggested that she be sent away to school and educated before we were married. To this he agreed and left. One of the reasons why I was interested in keeping his friendship was because I wanted to go on a hunting trip with him and he had promised to take me. Big Chief and his band were out on a hunt on the Salt Fork and had a run in with a band of Cheyennes who were on the war path. He was to take me with him on the next hunt but when father heard of all this he sent me away from the reservation for a few years. I never saw Big Chief or his daughter again; by the time I had returned they were both dead.

Father had a room at his home where the Indians stayed when they came to the post. There was a fire there and they would spread their blankets around and sleep on the floor.

One of the most interesting sights to me were the flocks of prairie chickens. They would fly over in clouds. There was

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a turkey roost between our house and the creek. Sometimes you would see deer in that area also.

The principal foods were beef, flour, cornmeal, coffee, and bacon. Bread was the staff of life and bacon was life itself. We bought our supplies from the traders who were here under Government license. They bought their supplies from Kansas City and St. Louis. They were shipped as far as possible by rail and then freighted overland.

The Black Jack hills abounded in deer and wild turkey. The reason the Osages chose this reservation was because of the timber. They were hunters rather than farmers. The Commission sent by President Grant showed the Indians some of the strip country and told them that that land was better for farming, but the Osages preferred the game to the farm lands.

The following is a story I heard related as a lad; Dr. Wister, Dr. Moore, and others, all Quakers, and all members of a commission, were coming out to look over some lands. They were riding in a Government ambulance with the Indians riding in attendance. When they were crossing the river the double tree broke and they were stranded in the quick sand and were

sinking very rapidly. Wah-she-pr-she, a great specimen of man hood, saw their predicament and immediately removed all of his clothing except a breech clout. Going to the conveyance he signified that they were to get on his back and he would carry them to shore. One at a time he carried the entire party. It was a great experience for the broad brims from the east.

I have letters here of my father's from the Cherokees in regard to the purchase of the reservation. The Osages had sold their lands in Kansas to the railroad for twelve and one half cents an acre. When father came among them this treaty was broken and they sold their lands to the Government for \$1.25 per acre. The Cherokees wanted \$2.25 per acre for their lands. The Osages believed that their price was ex orbitant and offered them \$0.25 per acre for the land. The Cherokees were offended and refused to talk about the land. The Osages went down to Tahlequah and the Cherokees wouldn't visit their camp nor invite them to eat, which is a great breach of etiquette among the Indians, so the Osages came back. Finally they went before President Grant, and he tried to get them to compromise. The Cherokees

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believed that they should receive as much for their lands as the Osages received for their Kansas lands. Finally President Grant sent the delegation home. One day a man came to father and asked to be shown the reservation. Father did not know the man but, putting his best foot forward, he took him over in the eastern part of the reservation which is the best part. The man left and it was not long after that they received word to pay the Cherokees \$0.70 per acre for the land. Father always believed that they could have bought the land cheaper if he had not shown the strange man the best of the land but the worst.

There were three tribes of the Osages, the Big Hill, Black Dog, and the Little Osages, and they numbered about 3,000. The Big Hills settled on Salt Fork creek. The Black Dogs settled on Hominy Creek and the Little Osages on the Caney River. The first move toward civilization was to break up these towns. The young bloods were incited to start bands of their own and these three bands were divided into seventeen bands. After this was done, individuals were encouraged to take claims, split rails and build fences around the land they had selected. After their fences were

built they were given a wagon, plow, and seed. How they enjoyed the corn and watermelon. If they would cut and score logs for houses, a mechanic was furnished to help and was called. Everyone helped. The Government furnished the meat and flour and the house raising was also a social event. If they would dig a well a man was furnished to help them and they were then given a bucket and a rope. There were about twelve women who were employed by the Government to go around to these houses and teach the Indians how to live in a house. Then they were issued cows, chickens and pigs.

Lots of the Indians opposed all this and even threatened to burn the Agency and troops had to be called in. One house about three miles west of town was the first double log house and became the home of Saucy Chief.

There was a civilization party among the Big Hills who wished the Indians to take the "white man's road". Among the leaders of this party were No-pa-walla, Che-to-pah and Saucy Chief. Among the leaders of the anti-civilization party were Wah-ti-an-kah, Big Hill Joe and Black Dog. Of course after a while they came into the civilized way, but for a long time they led a strong opposition.

Wah-ti-an-kah was a natural orator. He was a very fierce looking old fellow and when he spoke he looked so fierce and spoke so forcefully that men trembled. I had the honor of going to Washington, D. C. with a party of which he was a member. While in the City the entire party was taken up on the dome of the Capitol Building. Wah-ti-an-kah was so frightened that he sank to his knees and trembled like a leaf. It amused me that the fierce fellow who made men tremble by his fierceness should be so easily frightened. The entire party was taken to the cabinet room and presented to President Grant. This made a great impression on me that has lasted through life.

There was talk of allotment when father was agent but ~~allotment did not become a reality until 1907.~~ The opposition said that the half breeds had already claimed the choice portions of the land. All Cange land allotted to the tribe and none of the land was opened to settlement. Each headright received 160 acres homestead and 700 acres surplus. The surplus could be sold by permit but they were not allowed to sell their homesteads. The whites lived here as lessees or as employees of cattle men, but all whites had to have a

permit.

There was one battlefield I remember being pointed out to me. It is five or six miles south of Caney. Chief Big Foot, a Pawnee horse thief, rounded up a bunch of ponies when they lived at Osage Mission. The Osages overtook the Pawnees south of Caney and they had a battle on the ridge and Big Foot was killed.

There were no bridges in those days and the torrential rains caused the branch streams to rise and travelers had to be careful crossing the streams or they would be swept down stream and drowned.

The Osage people were a very happy people when I first came among them. They were always laughing and joking. When the men went out to hills to herd their ponies the hills would resound with their songs. They were a very honest people, never had to make a note or mortgage-their word was their bond. There were no lawyers, a few doctors, no banks and no money to speak of. Anything needed we went to the stores and were credited. The traders bought on credit and sold on credit. At payment, they would collect enough to pay their debts.

In the early day a couple of full bloods got drunk, up on Caney and one struck the other with a club and killed him.

The fellow was harmless but drunk. A U. S. Deputy went up and got him and paraded him around the agency in harness chains and handcuffs. He kept him in jail for a while and finally sent him to Wichita. He was charged with murder. A lawyer agreed to take his case for \$ 600.00 and promised the Indian that he would be freed. At the trial the lawyer said, "if the court please the crime committed was by one Osage against another Osage and over them we have no jurisdiction." So the Osage was freed.

Courts brought lawyers and trouble. Banks came in, doctors, and white settlers. The banks thought the traders wouldn't bank and the truth was that they had nothing to bank. Taxes began then and have been increasing every since.

There were three sub-agencies; one on Caney, Salk Creek and Hominy. There were sub-agents there that looked after the Indians. There were 200 half breeds and 3,000 full bloods.

The Catholics have regarded the Osages as theirs since the Civil war. Father Schoemaker and Sister Bridget were among the Osages when my father went among them in 1869.

The Pawnee trail ran east and west from Grand river west to the Cimarron. It was just a wagon track with

numerous trails along the road.

Where the present water works is located was known as Deep Ford. Father intended for the town to be called Deep Ford. At Father's resignation, J. M. Hiatt, of the traders Hiatt and Leighton, made application for the Post Office and had his daughter Lizzie Hiatt was appointed postmistress. He asked that the town be called Pawhuska after his friend, White Hair.

There was an epidemic of small pox that reduced the Indian population.