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BERRYHILL, JANE YARBOROUGH

INTERVIEW #6649

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Carl B. Sherwood  
Interviewer  
July 9, 1937

Interview with  
Mrs Jane Yarbrough Berryhill  
Route 1, Okstaha, Oklahoma.

I, Mrs Jane Berryhill, was born in Georgia in 1855.  
My father, Edward Yarbrough, was born in Georgia in 1832.  
My mother was Rachel Brokbill, and was born in Blunt,  
Tennessee in 1827.

I was four years of age when we left Georgia in  
ox wagons, and were many weeks on the road. The roads  
were very rough and when the streams were up we would  
camp for several days until the water was low enough to  
ford the streams. We finally located in Bailey County,  
Missouri, and lived there several months, then moved  
back to Georgia. People think times are hard now but  
they are nothing like the hardships we had to go through.  
Of course there was plenty of wild game for meat, but  
wheat and corn with which to make our bread was very  
scarce. Material for clothing was high, and money was  
scarce.

As we passed through villages the bands were play-  
ing and were asking <sup>for</sup> volunteers for the Civil War.

We located at Clarksville, Arkansas. Here we farmed, trapped and hunted wild game for their furs. We lived here about three years and were on the road again. We located in Tahlequah, Indian Territory, the Capitol of the Cherokee Nation. It is located on the grounds where the Cherokees first assembled in Council after their removal west.

In the fall we hauled our wheat and corn to Siloam Springs, Arkansas, to have it ground into flour and meal, enough to run us a year. In 1891 Tahlequah built its first flour and grist mill.

In 1880, I married Mr. Jake Berryhill at Mansfield, Missouri, and came to the Creek Nation, Indian Territory. To this union were born seven children. I also raised ten white orphan children and gave them what education I could. For years I taught Sunday School in a log church, called Hall's Chapel, which was about one mile south-east of Oktaha. Mr. Berryhill bought the Fleetwood farm which had a large double-log house with a two room lean-to on the back. This house faced the Texas Trail, and we sold fruit, vegetables, milk butter and meat to travelers on the road.

Many covered wagons, with their families out of the states, passed our home on the Texas Trail. I noticed one covered wagon with this inscription written on the wagon sheet, "Texas or Bust." I turned my home into a boarding house, and some of my first boarders were a bunch of surveyors who were surveying the right-of-way for the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad. Later I boarded track men and officials of the road.

Major Foreman built the first grist mill in Muskogee, where we hauled our corn and cotton. At the age of ten years I remember when the Cherokee and Creek soldiers who had served in the Union army were mustered out of service. This was in 1865. On returning to our homes we confronted many scenes of desolation. Many of our homes had been burned and the fences and crops destroyed and our horses stolen. During the war an organized band was engaged in stealing cattle and horses and running them across the Kansas line, where they were delivered to their partners in crime. They would find a market for the stolen property.

After the country was stripped of live stock, the Government in 1865, passed a law providing a heavy penalty for stealing and driving live stock out of the Indian Territory. 1863 and 1864 brought much suffering to the Creeks and Cherokees whose bravery prompted them to remain in their homes to protect themselves from the raiding bushwhackers who destroyed their families, stock and crops. The leaders of the Northern and Southern armies seemed to realize that Indian Territory was being sadly neglected, and both sides determined, early in 1863, to strengthen their forces in the Indian Territory. In January of that year General William Steel was placed in command of all the Confederate forces in Indian Territory. About the same time General Schofield was selected to reorganize the Union forces. Both of these leaders were hindered and embarrassed in their efforts toward planning their campaign by petty jealousies displayed by their superior officers. After entering the Territory, General Steele was unable to secure sufficient guns and ammunition and was soon compelled to retire from Honey Springs to the Texas line.