

GRAYSON, MARY.

THIRD INTERVIEW

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Jefferson Berryhill,
Interviewer.
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Interview With Mrs. Mary Grayson.
Okmulgee, Oklahoma.
CREEK MIGRATION AND INCIDENTS BEFORE
MIGRATION.

These stories of the migrations were told to Mrs. Mary Grayson by an old Creek Indian woman who came from Alabama during the removal of the Creeks. This Indian died just a few years ago. She told of the time while she was still in Alabama. She said the white people wanted to get rid of the Creeks, or to move them to Oklahoma. The white men being evil, plotted many ways to make them want to leave. She said the white people would put their children up to crying or screaming with all their might when they saw an Indian. This was to attract the attention of the soldiers, who would come to whip and beat the poor Indian who was innocent. The Indian got a very severe beating, because when being beaten he wouldn't say a word. This made the white soldiers so angry they could have killed the Indian. Then they tied him to a tree on his own land and told him to stay on his land or be beaten. She said this was done to scare him into selling his land and move to Oklahoma. Also many an old woman suffered mistreatment, some even

dying from beatings. She said many of the Indian men and women did sell their land. Some bought fine clothes, diamond rings, ear rings, gold bracelets, then they bought what looked to be fine saddle horses. She said they said that they were celebrating before leaving their homes in Alabama. Being about half drunk, they bought the seemingly fat horses. They rode along singing, shouting and whooping with gallon jugs of whiskey. She told of standing by the road side watching them as they came down the road, making all the noise they could. She said they were just passing by her, when all of a sudden the seemingly fat horses, one by one, became small. They had been fed with something that made them swell up, then to the Indians amazement, they saw the horses were poor and skinny. They knew they had been cheated, yet it was too late to do anything. Then she told of the promises the Government made to the Creeks, saying when they came to Oklahoma they would be given large tracts of land. If the tracts were too small, some more land would be given them; or if there was too much land then it would be bought from them. In moving many were reluctant to be moved. They were whipped and beaten, and then they were put on a boat.

Then she said after sailing for many days on the river, they came upon a boat that left ahead of them. It had been sunk and only the mast of the boat was seen, but many Indian men and women were floating on top of the water who had drowned. She said she knew many of these who were dead. Many of them had diamond rings, ear rings, and bracelets on their fingers and arms. The soldiers or officers on the boat were taking the rings, and bracelets from the dead Indians by cutting their fingers off with their knives. The captain gave orders to shoot anyone who took anything from the dead.

The Robbing of Esparhechar's Grave.

When Esparhechar the Creek Indian Chief died he was buried about three miles west and a half mile south of Beggs, Oklahoma, on his place. In his coffin were all his belongings and they were buried with him. His diamond stick-pin, rings, and a golden headed walking cane, which was given to him as a present while at Washington D. C. One morning his wife looked out of the window to see his coffin dug up. Upon investigation, it was found these articles mentioned were stolen. He was reburied but the grave robbers were never apprehended.