

GRAHAM, WALTER

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Form A-(S-149)

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INDIAN PIONEER HISTORY PROJECT FOR OKLAHOMA
INDIAN PIONEER HISTORY PROJECT FOR OKLAHOMA

Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty

Report made on (date) September 2 1937

Name Walter Graham

Post Office Address Sulphur, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) _____

DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 14 Year 1891

Place of birth Proctor, Indian Territory, Flint District

Name of Father J. W. Graham Place of birth Texas

Other information about father U. S. Marshal

Name of Mother Ladie Dice Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother Part Cherokee Indian blood

See 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. Use blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Interview with Walter Graham,
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

My father was J. W. Graham, born in Texas in 1866. He was a farmer and later was appointed United States Marshal.

My mother was Laddie Bice Graham, born in Bonham, Texas, in 1873. There were eleven children in our family. My parents both lived in the Flint District east of Tahlequah in the Cherokee Nation.

They got acquainted here and married at Stilwell in the Flint District under the Cherokee law. Father had to have ten or twelve persons sign a petition to the District Clerk signifying that he was a reputable citizen before he could obtain his license. His license cost ten dollars. Mother was part Cherokee Indian.

They were married about 1888. I was born April 14, 1891, in Proctor, Indian Territory, in the Flint District. Father was a United States Marshal. He would be gone for two or three months at a time and we wouldn't know where he was. He often brought the prisoners by our home as he was transporting them to Fort Smith. They rode in a covered wagon. There were

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rings along the side boards of the wagons to which these criminals were chained. One man rode ahead of the wagon on a horse and another rode behind it to prevent outlaws from waylaying the wagon and releasing the prisoners.

Flint District had a log house for a jail. Ned Christie was the guard. One night there was a bunch of fullblood Cherokee prisoners who were being held in this log jail and their fellow tribesmen from the Ozark Mountains east of Tahlequah came to set them free.

These Cherokees from the Ozarks killed Ned and his deputy and released the prisoners.

I have heard Father tell of an incident which shows the loyalty of Indians, one to the other. A Cherokee boy killed another Cherokee Indian. He was tried and found guilty in Flint District. They sentenced him to be hung. This was the method of execution among the Cherokees. He was taken to the capital of the Cherokee Nation, which was Tahlequah, and was held in jail until the day set for his death. The court house and jail were in the center of a lot which was enclosed by a high board fence. The scaffold also was inside this fence. There was a grove of

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trees east of the jail and the gates which admitted people to see the executions opened toward this grove.

On the day set for this boy's hanging, his father and

seventeen Cherokee Indians concealed themselves in this thicket of trees. When the jailer opened the gates the father and his companions rushed across from their hiding place and into the gates before they could be closed. They were well armed and rode around the scaffold; the Father said, "Bring him out." But the jailer refused. The boy was not hanged and later received a pardon.

Another incident which I remember among the Cherokees was the Beck and Proctor feud. Mr. and Mrs. Beck ran a grist mill in the Ozark Mountains near the present site of Stilwell. One day one of the Proctor boys came by and left some corn to be ground into meal. He went to Evansville, Arkansas, and when he returned late that evening, he was drunk. He told Mr. Beck to hurry and bring his bag of meal. Mr. Beck stepped to his pile of sacks, looking for Proctor's number. He was slow about finding it; and Proctor said, "I'll kill you," at the same time jerking a pistol from

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his pocket. Mrs. Beck, who was about eighty years old, stepped between them and he shot and killed her. This started the feud.

When young Proctor was being tried at Goingsnake

District court house in the Cherokee Nation, Mr. Proctor and Mr. Beck decided they would shoot it out, and settle it that way. At noon they drew two lines about twenty feet apart. The Proctors stood on one line, the Becks on the other. When the signal was given they began to shoot.

When the smoke cleared away there were eleven dead and two seriously wounded. Old Zeke Proctor and one of the Becks were the only survivors.

My parents are buried at Proctor.