

GRAYSON, MARY

INTERVIEW.

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Jefferson Berryhill,
Research Field Worker,
July 22, 1937.

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Interview with Mrs. Mary Grayson
202 West Tenth Street
Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Mrs. Mary Grayson was born in the southwest edge of Okmulgee, Oklahoma, on the very spot where now stands the Ball Brothers Glass Factory, in the year of 1871. And now lives at 202 West Tenth Street, Okmulgee, Oklahoma. She is a member of Chiaha Town and a Bird Clan.

She is one-eighth Creek Indian and white, she is sixty-six years old.

Her father, Henry Coker, was a Creek. Her mother, Liza McIntosh, was of Chiaha Town and Bird Clan. She was half Creek and part French.

Grandfather's and grandmother's names unknown.

Mrs. Mary Grayson is a lady of education; she has stood many times before the court as an interpreter for many Indians who can't speak the white man's language. Being along in years she knows and remembers the early Creeks. The Indian Missions she remembers are namely - she says there was an Indian Mission located three miles east of Wetumka, Oklahoma, by the name of "Levering Mission;" it was an Indian school. Then another Mission was located near Eufaula, Oklahoma, by the name of Asbury Mission which also was an Indian school. She had forgotten

the exact location of the Asbury Mission. Then the earlier missions built were Myaka and the Mission in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, which I have made reports on.

The southeast ground floor of the old Council House in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, was used as school for the Indians, although it was not a Mission. That's where Mrs. Mary Grayson went to school for a while.

Building New Homes in Indian Territory

Mrs. Grayson said that all the houses she saw being built were of logs; she said some were built of square hewed logs which made a good log house and others were built of round logs plastered, or mudded with mud mixed with grass in between the logs. She said the dining room was built separate from the bed room, also the smoke house, yet they were all built close together. She said it looked like a small village with so many houses for one family. They were very strict when a woman was in her monthly periods. A log house was built for them to live in while in that condition. In that house were the clothes and the plates, knives, forks, spoons, cup and saucer for them to use as they were not allowed to eat of different dishes or sleep in the same room with others. It was an old custom. They believed

in being clean and healthy.

This story of the buried treasure is not something new, it is known by many old Indians, I myself heard these stories repeated by my grandpa many times in his day. Mrs. Grayson knew it also. It was during the Civil War that the money was buried. O'Potheli Yahola was a head man of the Creek Tribe when the government paid the Creek Indians. As the chief handled the business for his people so the money was intrusted in his care to divide the money equally to each individual. But it was during the Civil War, and most all the Indians were scattered and it was a hard matter to find each person to give him his share. Seeing the situation he knew he could not do anything, so he decided to bury the money until after the war, then when all the Creeks were together again he would dig up the money and pay off his people. He emptied out all the money in one pile as they were twenty dollar gold pieces, then the money was put in a big trunk (an old fashion trunk) then four large and strong negroes were selected to carry the trunk of money to its unknow location. Two long poles were put under the trunk long enough so that two men on a side were stationed to carry the trunk. Small chains were put on the ends for the men to hold to, with that done

it was carried from the house by the four negroes and D'Potheli Yahola and his best friend, an Indian. - D'Potheli Yahola hired his friend for a purpose - when all was ready the four negroes picked up the trunk of money by the two poles and proceeded to its place. The money was so heavy the four men could not carry it very far. They'd carry it a few feet and rest, in that way it was taken away. The negroes dug the place, set the trunk of money in the hole and then the hired Indian shot each of the four negroes while they were still in the hole. After setting it (the money) in the hole, Yahola and his friend put the four negroes on top of the money and covered it up.

Indians being superstitious are afraid of hunting treasure so the treasure is still hidden; by taking an old man's word I can almost say I know its location, not caring to tell where.

Many years ago as a youngster, I heard from the lips of D. L. Berryhill who was my grandpa, this story I will relate. He said he was eight years old when O'Potheli Yahola buried the money. When the money was piled on the floor he saw it, he said after the money was put in the trunk it was full to the top. He said they were twenty dollar gold pieces. When the money was being

carried away he said he was watching them around the corner of the house when his mother came and slapped him. He said he ran then, but he said he knew where the location was. He used to tell us after he was too old to go anywhere; he died a few years ago. Now many people are trying to learn my clue of it.