

GREEN, MARY JANE.

INTERVIEW

12056

33

LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

34

Field worker's name Nannie Lee BurnsThis report made on (date) February 26 1938This legend was
secured from (name) Mary Jane GreenAddress 119 B. NW, Miami, Oklahoma.This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,If Indian, give tribe CherokeeOrigin and history of legend or story From memory and as told in the
family.Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached 7

Nannie Lee Burns
Investigator
February 26, 1938.

Interview with Mary Jane Green,
nee Shelton,
119 B. NW, Miami, Oklahoma.

When Wash Lee, a Cherokee and a Presbyterian Minister, brought his family to the Indian country from Georgia, one of his daughters, Nancy Lee, rode all the way from that state horseback behind her sister, Esther. There were three children of them and the brother, John, crossed the plains in 1849 and from California he sent his sister, Nancy, a little gold ring that had some diamonds cut in it, the points of the diamonds protruding from the ring. John died later in California and did not return to this country.

Nancy Lee married my grandfather, James Shelton, and their only son was my father, Spencer, who was born January 23, 1858, at Fairfield or Dwight's Mission.

My maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Foreman, married Johnson Proctor, the brother of Ezekiel.

Mother was born in 1866 and she and dad were married when she was seventeen and he was nineteen.

Grandfather Lee who lived near the mission was a Presbyterian minister and preached both in the native Cherokee tongue as well as in English.

GREEN, MARY JANE.

INTERVIEW.

12056

2

Grandfather Shelton lived near the mission and trained the boys to farm and it was while my parents were in school that they became acquainted and from the friendship formed there in school days came the love that caused them to marry. Father being the only child, they went to live with his parents where they continued to live for some time and later, with the help of his father, built a small house of native logs near and here the older children in our family were born but I, Mary Jane, was the first to be born in the new home.

As I stated earlier, Johnson Proctor was the brother of Ezekiel Proctor, the only person that the United States Government ever made a treaty with. Much has been written about him and his acts but there is a little thing that I would like to add that I have never seen mentioned and that is, when the trial of Ezekiel was in progress, when his friends rode up, on each side of each horse's bridle there was fastened a sprig of wild plum blossoms. The meaning of the wild plum blossom is, "we have come to fight". This was, no doubt the signal that caused the fight to start for the message of the plum blossoms served notice to those in the courtroom that they had come to fight and to get Ezekiel.

GREEN, MARY JANE.

INTERVIEW.

12056

3

Our grandfather, Johnson, was at the trial and was killed but my daddy was at the mill getting his meal ground while the trial was going on, thus saving the extra time.

My grandmother, Eliza Proctor, went after the body of her husband, riding all night.

Zeke Proctor had triplets, two girls and a boy, William, who lived to be grown.

Zeke had a very good memory and always spoke to people and always said that he knew all of his kin-folks. I had not seen him for a long time and one day after I was grown I met him and he spoke to me and I did not recognize him. Seeing that I did not know him, he asked me if I was not Mary Jane.

To us now it is amusing to remember that when we were small when the folks wanted us to do something and we were hesitating about it they would say to us, "I'll get old Zeke Proctor and Belle Starr after you."

There were many things that we used to remember and place confidence in and among them were:

When you heard the screech owl call from the top of the house that means a death in the family. There is something that you can say that will stop the owl. I have tried it and it has always stopped him.

When you see a storm approaching, you can place a butcher knife so the edge faces the cloud and it will split the cloud.

If you will pick up a live mole and rub him between your hands, loose him and pick him up again and rub him between your hands, repeating this three times, you can cure the asthma.

The red-bud month was March, the bean month was May, and the Papaw month was October.

Grandfather Shelton, who was a Unionist, was stationed at Fort Gibson during the Civil War but Grandmother remained at or near her home near Barren Forks during the entire War. She did not suffer as did most of the people, though I have heard Grandmother tell of the soldiers coming to the home and taking the feather beds out into the yard and ripping them open and, after emptying the feathers out, take the ticks to wrap around themselves. The home was not disturbed but others around were not so fortunate as I have heard Grandmother speak of a lady who had a small child and one day when she was washing she told Grandmother the child was hungry and when she asked what they had to eat, she said that all she had had to feed the baby for the past four days was pumpkin seeds.

We never had any darkies to live on our place but some who lived near would work for us. One fall some darkies were shucking corn and Grandmother would give them their supper. One night it started raining while they were eating and while sitting around waiting for the rain to cease, they began to tell ghost stories and soon they were really afraid to go home. So Grandmother got them some quilts and they slept on the dining room floor that night.

The new home that was built just before I was born was three miles west of Tahlequah. This house contained several rooms and while it was of logs it was sanded and plastered on the inside and weatherboarded on the outside and had two big fireplaces.

We had many flowers, from the little ones to the big lilac bushes, and the four hard maples that are there were set out the year I was born.

Grandfather had always been a farmer and a stockman and my father had always worked with him and their interests were closely associated.

Our mother died when I was six years old and while Father secured help to look after us (at this time there were seven and I was the middle one) Grandmother always looked after things

and all of our wants and she was always seemed more like Mother than anything else and my father seemed like a big brother.

There are many childhood happenings that stand out very vividly in my life. We had great rows of cherry trees and I remember when the cherries were ripe and had fallen on the ground how we liked to squeeze the seed out of the cherry between our toes and see how far it would go.

As we grew larger we were sent to school and I attended school at the Female Seminary though I did not stay until I graduated.

Our life was pleasant in those days, we used to have many dances when the darkies would furnish the music. They were very different from today, for then the mothers accompanied their daughters and would sit around the room.

I was married to Hardin H. Green who was born in Texas, December 2, 1856. After serving as an apprentice in shoe shop he had gone to the Pacific Coast and after his return to Tahlequah had entered the mercantile business.

His sister, Tamsey Williams, had settled with her husband and family near Miami and so we were persuaded to take our allotments near. Here our two girls and boy have been raised and here my husband passed away last summer.

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12056

7

In the later years of our life at Tahlequah, my grandfather moved to Tahlequah where the last years of my grandparents life was spent. Father, who passed many years ago, never married again after Mother's death.