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Interview with James Roane Gregory.
Father-Edward Gregory.
Mother-Anna Jones.

MEMOIRS OF JAMES ROANE GREGORY

Material for this article was obtained from various sources: from Mrs. Chas. Whitt, granddaughter of the subject of this sketch; from J. M. Robertson, justice of the peace, and Claude Crutchfield, merchant at Inola; from Mrs. Lillie Fisher, of Beaumont, Texas, (formerly of Inola, Oklahoma,) and possibly others.

James Roane Gregory was one of the prominent members of the Muskogee, or Creek, tribe of Indians who became, upon the advent of statehood, a citizen of Rogers county, for, be it remembered, most of Rogers county--all, save Inola township, was carved out of the Cherokee Nation, Cooweescoowee District.

Mr. Gregory was about one fourth Creek Indian, inheriting his Indian blood from his mother, whose maiden name was Anna Jones, daughter of a white man and Creek Indian mother.

PARENTAGE.

His father, Edward Gregory, was a native of the State of New York, a white man with possibly a strain of Indian (Wyandotte) blood in his veins. Nothing further is known of this man save that he came down into the Indian Territory

about 1840 and was married in about 1842 by the Post Chaplain at Fort Gibson, to a Miss Seneene Roane, of the Creek tribe of Indians .

They settled near the present town of Tallahassee, in what is now Wagoner County, and there their son, James Roane Gregory, was born a year later. About 1858 or 1860 the family "went west", locating near the present City of Bristow. There they lived until the out-break of the Civil War, when the husband and father was murdered by bushwhacker sympathizers with Southern cause and the mother soon after died of grief and young "Jimmie" was left to face the world alone.

In the meantime he had attended school at the old Creek Mission school northwest of the present City of Muskogee, and secured the rudiments of an education, especially in the English and Creek languages--as they were spoken and written. Of course he had a fair knowledge of each but it was the desire of the father, and agreeable to the mother, that he be equally proficient in both. His command of the English language was remarkable, and he was considered one of the best interpreters in the Creek Nation and equally good at making translations. His command of English was especially remarkable in view of the fact that he always, as he stated on various occasions, did his thinking in the

musical language of the Creek Indian.

He was an omnivorous reader and his log cabin home, five miles southwest of Inola, was filled with books. Of course he studied law and he became a famous advocate in the courts of the Creek Nation. As a result he was unanimously elevated to the bench, being elected Judge of Coweta District several times--was, in fact, never defeated for that office. His countrymen called him the "Blue-eyed Judge"--His eyes being a bright blue.

When the Civil War got hottest in the Indian Country, about 1864, he joined other "Loyal Creeks" and served until the end of the war under the famous Indian General, ~~Copthie~~ Yahola. It was at the battle of Coal Creek, near the present town of Catoosa, that he was wounded, receiving a charge of buckshot in one of his legs, which caused him to be retired. A Creek Indian girl assisted him in walking from the battlefield to her home on Salt Creek, a mile away, where she nursed him back to health and in 1865, they were married at the same place where his parents had been married, by the Post Chaplain at Fort Gibson.

He and his wife located in the Verdigris bottoms, seven miles southwest of Inola and some ten or twelve miles south-

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east of the present town of Catoosa. Mr. Gregory cut the logs and with the aid of a pony (all he ^{had} left after the war) Mrs Gregory dragged them to the location decided upon and there they erected the log cabin, on the western bank of the Verdigris, where they lived for several years and where were born their four children; Gilbert, now a resident of St. Louis Mo., and father of Mrs. Chas. Whitt, of Claremore; Albert and Archer (Now deceased) and Arthur, now a resident of Claremore and connected with the "Indian Hospital". There they resided until the building of the Missouri-Pacific railroad and establishment of a post office at Inola. Previously they had made regular weekly pilgrimages to Catoosa for their mail, but with the building of the railroad, he built a new home on the east bank of the Verdigris near Inola and there they lived until both died, prior to 1910, he ~~preceding~~ her. Both are buried in the Inola cemetery near the former ~~boundary line~~ of the Cherokee and Creek Nat. on.

Away back in 1896 Judge Gregory was nominated by the Progressive party of the Creek Nation as their candidate for Principal Chief (Governor) of the Creek Nation. He advocated allotment of land, a proposition then unpopular and he was defeated by L. C. Perryman.

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In 1899 he was appointed by the United States government as Superintendent of schools for the Creek Nation and did much to put the educational system on a satisfactory basis. Judge Gregory was known as one of the best informed men of the Creek Nation and his only fault was that he lived "ahead of his time", that he advocated a final settlement of the affairs of his people, including allotment of lands, before the Creek Indians were ready for it. Time proved the wisdom of his "findings." Judge Gregory was well informed on the history of the Creek Indians and a fluent writer on his chosen subject, his best known writings being an epic poem entitled "Lucy's Pony" and the famous "Track Mound."