

INDEX CARDS:

Dwight Mission
Cherokee Nation
Tribe, Cherokee
Civil War Refugees
Ranching
Chisholm Trail
Cattle Drive
Muskogee

James S. Buchanan,
Field Worker. - 8 -

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name James S. Buchanan.

This report made on (date) June 17, 193 7

1. Name Looney Hicks Griffin.

2. Post Office Address Warner, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route. 1

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 19 Year 1849.

5. Place of birth Dwight Mission, Cherokee Nation.

6. Name of Father Jack Griffin. Place of birth Georgia.

Other information about father Cherokee.

7. Name of Mother Dellila(Petitt)Griffin Place of birth _____

Other information about mother Cherokee.

Notes 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. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached five.

James S. Buchanan,
Field Worker.

164

I (Looney Hicks Griffin) was born May 19, 1849,
at the old Dwight mission.

My father was Jack Griffin, a fullblood Cherokee.

My mother was Dellila (Petitt) Griffin, halfblood
Cherokee.

I was eleven years old at the beginning of the
Civil War ~~when~~ when my father took the family and moved
to the Choctaw Nation on the Red River to avoid the un-
safe condition that existed in the Cherokee Nation brought
on by the War. After the close of the War my father moved
the family back to the Cherokee Nation, settling at Tomaha,
which was then known as Phesant Bluff. We lived there four
years, then moved to a place three miles south of Webbers
Falls where my parents resided the remainder of their lives.

I spent the greater part of my early active life work-
ing on cattle ranches in Oklahoma, then the Indian Territory.

The first outfit I was with, when I was only a strip
of a lad, was the old Frost Starr Cattle Ranch which was
situated about four miles east of Porum, or where Porum is
now situated, as the little settlement at the Frost Starr
ranch known as Starvilla was the town of those parts at
that time.

After leaving the Frost Starr ranch I went to work for an outfit driving cattle over the old Chisholm Trail from Texas to the Cherokee strip and Kansas. I remember one trip we left Muskogee, which was then just a cow town, on the 4th of July with an outfit of about fifteen cowboys on horseback and a chuckwagon. We went to Gainsville, Texas, where we took a herd of 1600 head of Texas cattle and started for the Cherokee strip over the Chisholm Trail. We would drive the cattle all day until about one hour before sundown, then we would stop the herd, let them have about an hour to graze and bed down, after the herd would become quiet and bedded down about three herders would stay on duty and ride patrol of the herd while the other members of the crew got their much needed rest, bedded down on a blanket with their saddle for a pillow. The first two riders would ride until midnight, then one would go to the camp, call three of the boys and they would ride the herd the remainder of the night. We reached our destination with this herd and delivered them at the old Tom Hutton ranch about the 15th of December. We were more than five months making that trip which was a good average.

Of course there were no bridges in those days, therefore all streams had to be forded or the herd was forced to swim the deeper streams.

In 1890, I was married to Mary Ann Morgan, Cherokee, daughter of Mark and Cynthia (Smith) Morgan, both Cherokees. Ten children were born to this union, six of which are living at the time of this writing.

My only education was obtained in a pay school in the Choctaw Nation. The fee to this school was fifty cents per month. The school house was a small log structure with a dirt floor. The seats were split logs with the flat side up with holes bored and pole legs driven in the holes. I attended this school two eight month terms. During that time I made my home with a man by the name of Autery and worked for him outside of school time to pay for my keep.

Muskogee.

I remember Muskogee as it appeared in its beginning, only a few houses near the first railroad station that was built when the Katy railroad built through the territory. I drove cattle to that place and herded them, waiting for shipment just south of what is now Broadway and where the Midland Valley station now stands was a tall grass pasture.

If I had the privilege of living my life over again I would prefer to live it in the days of my early life for we never saw conditions in those days as they are the last few years. It was not much of a problem in those days for a man to provide for himself and his family.

This territory in the early days was a hunter's paradise. Deer, antelope, bear, wild turkey, black wolves, wildcats and other game roamed through the woodlands, and the valleys and prairies were covered with chickens, quail, and other wild fowl. The finest fish of almost every variety filled the streams and lakes of this territory.

Those days have gone forever and only linger in beautiful memories of the past, and I, like many other old timers, have seen our last roundup on this side of the divide.