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

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This report made on 3-16-37

1. Name Robert Willis Hamilton

2. Post Office address Okmulgee, Okla.

3. Residence address 520 Siminole Ave.

4. Date of Birth 1859

5. Place of birth Elgin Mills, Ontario, Canada

6. Name of father John Place of birth Glassco, Scotland

7. Name of Mother Jessie Montgomery (Born) Islay, Angilshire
Scotland.

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Indian Pioneer History Project 8-149

Interview of R.W. Hamilton
By Grace Kelley
March 16, 1937

Thomas F. Meagher, Super.,
109 South Main,
Tulsa, Okla.

I came to the Indian Territory by train, got off at Muskogee, and came to Okmulgee by stage coach the same day. It was in 1885. I got a job clerking for Cap Severs, F.B. Severs, and worked there for a year. He decided I would be more beneficial to him at his Muskogee store, so he transferred me there. None of the streets were named then but the Okmulgee store was where the Citizens National Bank is now. The same west wall as then. The Muskogee store was at the corner of Main and Muskogee Ave. There is a Hotel there now.

In 1894 I married Susan Cherokee Thompson, at Tahlequah. As her name implies, she was a Cherokee Indian. I don't want to brag about my wife, she died last month, but she was quite a distinguished artist.

She painted a picture of Sequoyah, the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet, that is about three feet square. There have been several made of him but hers seems to be a masterpiece. It was at the Tulsa Historical Exhibit and everybody was enthusiastic in their praise of it. I'd show it to you but her brother has taken it, and is going to have it hung in a prominent place in the School at Tahlequah.

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by Grace Kelley

I have about a half dozen of her paintings that I'd like to show you though. (There were two of flowers, three scenes and two etchings. One of herself, when she was a young lady in school, about 19. The other of her brother. She took a photo and enlarged it, the frame is about four feet square. I wouldn't consider myself a critic but I liked them)

There use to be a noon-day stop of the Stage, I've eaten lunch there many times, half way between Muskogee and Okmulgee. It was called "Lee Town". Ann Lee ran the Hotel and her husband Dave Lee had the grocery store. There until the the railroad came through, then they moved to Boynton:

An Orphans School for the colored children was about fifteen miles west of Muskogee. Joe Davidson, who went by the name of Buzz Hawkins, that must have been his church or war name, I don't know but I do know that he didn't go by his right name, ran this Home.

Shieldsville never was very big, just a few buildings.

Deep Fork Ford is still there and will always be there, but it's not is use anymore.

There is a Salt Spring near Salina, in the Cherokee Nation. I've visited it many times. It just bubbles right up out of the ground, and it sure stinks.

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Marshalls

Bass Reeves-Fort Smith

Bud Ledbetter-Muskogee

Frank Jones- Muskogee

Creek Legislators I remember:

Legis Parryman

Gen. Porter

Dave Hodge

Sam Grayson

Washington Grayson

John Goat

John Buck

When the Creek Council House was built, they got the rock South of town. They had to build a bridge across a gully. The rock abutments are still there but the bridge is gone.

Chief Checota is buried two or three miles northwest of Okmulgee, alone, there isn't anyone else buried there. There was a marker at his grave that I could see from my window. It has fallen down but I am sure it is still there.

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Distinguished or Prominent Persons

Sugar George made quite a bit of money in the stock business. He wore a linen duster, winter or summer, regardless of the weather. When the Creek Council met, Henry Fisher put up a resolution and they passed on it, that Sugar George should take off his linen duster. It was winter time, the snow and frost was on everything. The House of Representatives passed the resolution and it read something like this: Sugar George is bringing the Creek Council in disrepute in the eyes of the world, by wearing that linen duster all the time. So be it resolved that this honorable body ask Sugar George to remove the linen duster. It isn't on record whether he removed it or not.

There was an Indian girl, Agnes Bell, who was more than average among her tribe of people. I don't know what became of her.

A Freedman who came here but didn't live here, was Coody Johnson. He had the greatest intellect, a smart man. He graduated from the Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. He lived among the Seminoles and was the advisor to the Chief. The real chief but not in name. He spoke both languages.

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Major Cramer should be mentioned, he was above the average mill run. A retired merchant.

Cap F.B. Severs had a ranch fifteen miles north-east of Okmulgee. His home was destroyed by fire a few months ago.

William Harvison, a retired Indian merchant. Took a prominent part in the Ispahecha War.

Sam Haines was a man that any woman would have been proud to have his hand in marriage, if she could have had the chance. He was a regular ladies man. He was smart and could tell you a lot if he would. He lives in the country but gets his mail in Okmulgee.

A very eccentric man was Prof. Rossin, who taught in a little country school about twenty miles from Okmulgee. He boasted of having been born in the shadow of the Old St. Paul, in London. Once he lectured those little Indian children all day on Psychology, You can imagine how fast those children learned under him. One day he undertook the trip to town alone and got lost. After spending the night in a haystack on the prairie, he saw a house in the distance and went to it. When he called a white woman came out and said, "How do you do, Sir." He was so

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surprised to hear the "Henglish language" spoken. He asked her what her name might be and she told him it was Josephine Childers He said." What a great combination of names. I thought I was transported back to the confines of the Reign, but to my great Hastonishment I hear the Henglish language spoken." After that he brought two guides and two interpreters with him when he'd come to Okmulgee.

Alec Posey was a Creek Poet that everyone should know about. Somehow he was drowned in a flooded stream. They have the limb of the tree, in the Council house, where he hung on for hours before he had to turn loose and drown. He had held on to this limb to keep his head out of the water. The people who were looking for him got there just too late.

Dave Carr was an old time Indian, a successful and I suppose, an honest one. I never heard anything wrong about him. He got drunk once in a while, but most of folk do that. He was killed and it was thought that the son did it. at least the son knew just where to go to find him so he must have known something about it. There was no trace of any white citizen having anything against him. Dave's wife died a natural death. When Isragl was killed he had threatened a white farmer and this farmer saw him and a negro named Sharpe or else Grayson, I don't remember which, riding up. He stood by the window and shot him through it, killing him. Then he went to the authorities and told them what he had done. They had his trial at Muskogee

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and turned him loose. I can't remember his name though.

Israel's sister married Solomon Anderson. Mrs. Emma Anderson, of Okmulgee, is real old and a widow.

Cap Severs married another named Annie, and they had several children, two of them are still living. Mary and Annie are both widows and run the Severs Hotel of Muskogee. Mary married the wealthy Billie Owan.

Anderson was a prominent man, his daughter, Lizzie, married Blueford Miller. He was a very successful stockman here in this part of the country. (S) was his brand. There were ⁴three children to this union, one son and three daughters. Bunch Miller made a success in cattle. He had a ranch North of Tulsa at Mansford, also one fifteen miles North-east of Okmulgee, lives there. The oldest girl married Ed Hart, the President of the Citizen's National Bank. She died not long ago. He has considerable means. Marry married Harry Hart and they had three girls and two boys. One girl is teaching in the Okmulgee school, main instructor of the minds of the white folk. One is a book-keeper at the Citizen's National Bank. The other is very pretty, a great beauty, so pretty that it is noticeable, works at Ramsey Fulfords Dry Goods.

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Gen. Porter was in command of the Non-Ispahacha or law abiding citizens. That was before I came here, I think it was about 1878.

Moti Tiger was a prominent and good citizen who lived in the country. His daughter, Kate Shaw lives in Wagoner, Oklahoma. She is highly educated, intellegent and a beauty.

Mrs. Johnson Tiger, I beleive, is the most enlightened in the country.

Cap. Christofer Belcher was the Post Master for several years. An educated man.

There was a ~~Hotl~~ Hotel man of fair intellegence, took the daily paper but we say he had poor taste. He had a negro wife. The hotel was at the corner of Sixth and Grande Ave.

You want to see Bill and Walter and Perry Morton. They are Indians who will talk. They are from fifty years to sixty-five years old. Lived here all their lives.

I want to tell you a funny little story and then I belsive that is all I know of interest. There was a well to-do man and his wife lived at the Hotel. She was nice, I don't see how on earth she came to marry him, everyone liked her. They had no children. He went hunting every day and never worked. We didn't see how he could make

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a living but as they had plenty we supposed he was rich, and in a way he was. One day a letter was picked up, that he had dropped in the corrador of the hotel. When it was read we knew how he made a living. His mother was paying him seventy five dollars a month to stay away from home. And in this letter he told her that if she didn't raise his wages to one hundred dollars a month he was coming home.

That was about the queerest way of making a living I ever heard of.

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Mr.Hamilton is a very nice old man himself, who seems to see the good in the other person.