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BENTON, EFFIE PEARL.

INTERVIEW

#9144

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

Field Worker's name Ethel V. Elder

This report made on (date) November 3, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Effie Pearl Benton (Ghostaw)

2. Post Office Address Watrika, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 817 North Elm Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 8 Year 1885

5. Place of birth Ryan, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father Cass Grey Place of birth unknown

Other information about father Died, December, 1888;

7. Name of Mother Julia Johnson Place of birth Carter County

Other information about mother Died February 1, 1919;

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 6

Interview with Effie Pearl Benton
Waurika, Oklahoma.

Investigator - Ethel V. Elder
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
November 3, 1937

I was born January 8, 1835, at Ryan. I lived around there all my life until I was married.

My father's name was Cass Grey; he was killed on Christmas day, 1838, when a man rode up to the gate and shot him. I was only three years old but I shall never forget it as I was almost frightened to death. Father is buried in the old Benton Cemetery.

My mother's name, before her marriage, was Julia Johnson. She was born in Carter County, close to Ardmore. She was Choctaw Indian, but I do not know very much about the Choctaw Tribe. She died February 1, 1919, and is buried in the old Benton Cemetery.

This old Benton Cemetery was first set aside as the family burying ground for the Benton family, about fifty years ago; it is located between the towns of Ryan and Terral. There are several other graves in this cemetery of some poor people who lost some of their people while passing through the country.

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I attended the school at Ryan when I was a little girl and then attended a private school at Belcher, Texas, until I was about ten years old; the teacher was a Mrs. James. Then Mother sent me to St. Elizabeth Catholic School, at Parcell, for over two years, then I came back to Ryan and attended the school there until I was married, at the age of sixteen, to G. M. Benton. We lived on my father's ranch at Ryan, for about a year and then moved to Nocona, Texas, ^{living there} for almost a year, came back to Ryan and lived there about two years and then moved to Ringling, and from there we moved to Waurika, where we have lived about twelve years.

When I was twenty years old I went to Muskogee and registered for the drawing of our Indian land. I drew about two hundred and twenty acres and my oldest daughter Ola, now Mrs. Ernest Forsythe, also drew about two hundred acres. All of this land was over around Ringling.

When we children, six girls and two boys, would attend church they would load all of us into the old hay wagon and away we would go to the old time camp meeting grounds down on Flat Creek, between Ryan and

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Terral; these meetings were held in the old log house on the cattle ranch, which was the only house for miles and miles around. The camp meetings would last for two weeks and longer, some times. There was a small school-house, called the Solomon School, about two miles from where we lived and some times we would have a Sunday service there.

We used to have play parties and all day singing and sometimes night singing parties in place of the play parties; if any of the folks played the organ, accordion, fiddle, banjo, or any other instrument, they would bring it along and we would have the best times ever. and then we used to have the old time spelling matches that would always create a great deal of fun.

We went to Bowie, Texas, to do our shopping about once or twice a year and we always tried to buy enough to last for several months. We would have to make the trip with the wagon and team and it would take two or three days to make the trip; we would have to cross the river at the ferry down below where the town of Terral is now located.

The cattle men had to drive the cattle to Fort Worth and sometimes to Kansas City, to the market and there would be hundreds of cattle driven through at a time.

Joe Douthitt, Fance Bagsby and several other cowboys worked for my step-father and they would always help drive the cattle to market. There was a great big fat Dutchman who always went along to take care of the chuck wagon and do the cooking; they would have much fun out of him about being so fat and he was always in a jolly good humor.

Sometimes the Comanche Indians would come down through and stop at Ryan or Terral for two or three days and camp, if there was any amusement of any kind going on that they wanted to attend, but they were always very quiet and peaceable.

S. W. Ryan, Suggs, Trent and some others had the largest ranches out through the ranch ranges with thousands of heads of cattle on each ranch.

Some of the first houses on these ranches and on my father's ranch, too, were half dugouts with the tops above the ground, made of logs.

When I was very small I was always scared to see

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a cloud of smoke low on the ground as it usually was a prairie fire; the men would have to hurry and hitch up the teams and plow great deep furrows and make ditches and saddle the horses and drag wet sacks all along to wet the ground before the fire reached that far and they would pile up great piles of rubbish to try to stop the fire.