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Interview with William Jones, Indian.
By Gus Hummingbird, Field Worker.

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William Jones, a full-blood Indian of the Cherokee Nation, was born in Goingsnake District, May 27, 1873. His father was Nero Jones, a full-blood Cherokee. His mother was Eliza McIntosh, a Creek woman.

William was born on Jack Wright's farm near the present village of Christie, Oklahoma. His parents had separated just prior of his birth. After this separation Mrs. Jones, being a Creek, did not like the Cherokee Nation. She gave her baby to John Walkingstick, a prominent Cherokee citizen of that time.

Jones was not related to the Walkingsticks. He grew to manhood on the farm of said Walkingstick in what is now known as Peavine neighborhood.

(EARLY LIFE)

William, or Bill, as he is usually called by his friends, spent his early life on the Walkingstick farm. He was taught how to do almost anything at an early date, such as farming, blacksmithing, cattle herding, as the Walkingsticks were early day cattle men.

The Walkingstick farm was about the largest farm in this community. It was cleared by a bunch of slaves before the Civil

War.

This farm had formerly belonged to Jim Walkingstick, John's father. Jim, at this time, had moved off the mountain to his other farm just south about a mile, now known as Charley Ketcher farm.

Bill also became a great violinist. The Walkingsticks were great dancers. He had been to many dances on this farm.

(EDUCATION)

Bill received what the Cherokees termed a good education at that time. He finished the sixth grade at the old Peavine School. Bill was treated as a son by the Walkingsticks, and being well to do people, they kept him in school regularly.

The old Peavine school was of log construction. No finery was to be found. Only two windows were in the building. One large door on the south end of it gave an open view to the only travelled road that passed through the neighborhood.

The water that they drank was carried from a small spring which is to be found today about one hundred yards south of the modern West Peavine School.

John Walkingstick, John Whitmire, and Jeff Ketcher were

the school officers. He does not know whether they were the school board or not. But in later years he learned that the schools were controlled by a Board of Education appointed by the Chief.

The neighbors cut the wood that was burned at Peavine school. The blackboards were painted oak boards. Tablets were not known then. Slates were used.

Some old teachers he remembers are Nannie Whitmire, who later married Ed Clyne, a pioneer white man; Charlotte Whitmire; Mrs. Rattlingourd from Tahlequah; Mont Adair, and Ella Spradling. His old school mates are Hooley Blackwood, Bill Downing, Wilson Walkingstick, William England, Lizzie Manus, Eliza Sixkiller and Nannie Sixkiller, and Nannie Sixkiller.

(CHURCHES)

Antioch Baptist was the only church that the Walkingsticks attended. This church was already a well established church when Bill grew old enough to realize anything.

The Cherokees called this church Big Shed. It was established soon after the Civil War, it has been told him by the old timers. He has heard many sermons preached in this old church house and among the early day ministers he remembers are Johnson Spade, Adam Lacie, Nelson Terrapin, Mr.

Locust and J.B.H. Gritts. The last named is buried at the old cemetery there.

This church was located on Peavine Creek about five miles north of the present town of Stilwell, Oklahoma.

(CAMP MEETINGS)

Mr. Jones attended several Camp Meetings at the old Antioch Church. He has seen as many as three thousand Cherokees come to this place for the meetings. These meetings lasted about two weeks or longer. Every family came in wagons and pitched tents for shelter. Food was brought along to last for several days. In the evening the fires began to lighten up the church grounds.

People from all over the Cherokee Nation would be present at these meetings. This was an annual affair. Later this gathering was called the Cherokee Baptist Association, of which Mr. Jones is now a member.

Guards were appointed by the sheriff of the District to keep peace at these meetings. Mr. Jones has seen as many as fifty people baptized on Sundays.

(ROADS)

The roads were rough, just an opening through the forest.

There were no highways. Taxes were not known for up-keep of the roads. The roads around Peavine were kept in good shape by the farmers. They would give work on the roads that led to their homes. A big dance would follow at night.

The Walkingsticks, Whitmires, Crittendens, and the Blackwoods were well-to-do families, and lived close to each other at that time. Sometime these four would get together, discuss the road problems. They would agree to hire so many hands to fix a certain piece of road, each man hiring as many as he liked or the number he was able to pay. These payments were usually made by produce that was raised on the farm.

Farms were made the same way. They were cleared by these workings. Homes were built by the same method. Rail mauling was common and this was a great sport among the Cherokees. When a farmer was rushed for rails he would offer to a prize for the two men that made the most rails. Timber was fine those times, three hundred rail was no big job for many Cherokees.

The main road traveled to points along the Arkansas was the road known as the Old Fort Smith road that led through Lees Creek Hills. This road struck the Arkansas line near the present town of Uniontown, Arkansas. Then

south, crossing the Big Lees Creek at Natural Dam, through Cedarville to Van Buren. This was a cattle market for the Walkingsticks.

Jones has gone on a few trips to Fort Smith with the Walkingsticks. The route described was the route that they took when they went. The other route was through by Short, Oklahoma. Several men were killed along this route, so the cattle drivers were afraid to use it any longer. After Joseph Crittenden was killed it made matters worse. Joe was a neighbor to the Walkingsticks. Some say that robbery was the motive for this murder. Others think that he was murdered for being a star witness against a man that was accused of murder. Later this case was dismissed in court.

(EPIDEMICS)

Chills was the common disease among the Cherokees.

They were treated by the use of herbs. These medicines were usually prescribed by some medicine man. Common remedy that everybody used for chills was Shuck Tea and Mullin Root tea.

For bad cold, "sweating" was the process used to relieve them. The patient was covered tightly in the bed with the exception of his head. A couple pots of boiling water was placed under the covers with him. In a few minutes the sweat began to show in his face. He was kept under the covers after

the sweat began to show about half an hour. The pots were removed and his clothes changed for they would be wet with the sweat.

This made the patient very weak. He remained in bed for three or four days. He was given the proper food to gain this lost strength such as squirrel soup, in winter; craw-dad soup in the summer. In a day or so the patient was given Car-Nut-Che, a rich dish that was made out of hickory-nut goodies. This is a favorite dish among the old timers yet.

Appendicitis was not known in the Peavine Community. In case of emergency such as "shot wound", a white doctor would be summoned from Evansville, or Dutch Mills.

He does not remember any operation performed in the country at that time. Consumption was the most dreaded disease among the Cherokees. When it started in the family it usually killed all of them. They claimed that it could not be cured. They did not try to take anything for it.

Measles were also common in the Cherokee Nation. This disease broke out almost every year in the summer. Vaccination was unknown and this disease was not prevented as it is now. Usually the whole community had it at the same time. Spice

Wood Tea was the common remedy used in every home to break them out.

(CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS)

Some of the customs of the early Cherokees were to take care of the sick, orphans, and widows. They surely did believe in that way of living. If a neighbor was taken sick, he was brought everything imaginable good to eat.

In case of a long siege of sickness, men were selected by some leader in that particular neighborhood to set up with him night after night until he was better. But they were very careful in selecting these men, especially if a medicine man was attending him.

Here are some of the beliefs of the old timers. A person that had helped in any way at a funeral was not permitted to come in the room where one lay sick.

A person that was supposed to be a witch was not allowed to come into the room. Any other Indian doctor from some other clan was not allowed to come. A murderer was not allowed in a room where a person was that had been shot.

They believed that a murder could be solved, when it was committed and the murderer not known, by taking the guilty person to the corpse of the deceased. When the guilty person looked on the corpse of his crime, it was believed that the blood from the wound would be visible. Mr. Walkingstick has told Mr. Jones that

this was used in North Carolina years ago. This is a belief that will never go down as long as a Cherokee lives.

(FINANCING FARMERS)

Farmers in those days were financed by their neighbors. There were no banks or any kind of borrowing institutions. There was plenty in the Cherokee Nation, but, not everybody had money at that time. The Walkingsticks, Starrs, Whitmires, Crittendens, and the Blackwoods were all well-to-do people.

Mr. Walkingstick has loaned as much as two-hundred dollars to his neighbors, one borrower being Locust Chicken. Another time Mr. Jones remembers Mr. Walkingstick loaned Fixin Pritchett one-hundred dollars with no security. Mortgages and notes were unknown then.

(MILLING POINT)

The nearest wheat milling point was Dutch Mills. This was their trading point also. Dutch Mills was sixteen miles away. They would go about twice a month.

But for corn milling they would go to Eli Wright's Grist Mill which was located on Dutch Mills Creek, just above the forks on Baron river now. This mill was at the

mouth of Chewey Hollow. It is now called Wrights Chapel School. This mill was seven miles away. Bill used to go to this mill on a horse.

(FURS AND HIDES)

When Bill grew to manhood, he became a hunter. He had good dogs, furs were plenty, and no laws were in force to prohibit anyone from hunting. Opossums, skunks, and other small animals were to be found.

Peddlers from Fort Smith came through the Indian country peddling their wares of beads, clothes, guns, watches and other things.

The Cherokees became great hunters. Cincinnati was a market for furs. The price was small. A good possum hide was worth only five cents. Cow hides were worth about fifty cents. Most of the hides were used at home for chair bottoms.

(GAME AND FISH)

Game was plentiful, such as squirrels, turkeys, deer, and wild pigeons. There were so many turkeys in the Peavine neighborhood that it was difficult for a man to raise a patch of peas. Wild pigeons came in droves every Fall. They formed what was known as "Roosts". The most important Roost was

located in the north end of the Goingsnake District, somewhere in the neighborhood of the present Chance, Oklahoma.

Streams were full of all kinds of fish. There were no laws to prohibit a person from fishing any way he wanted to fish. Every year there were thousands of fish killed with "Buck Eye" Poisoning. The next year there would be that many more fish.

(U. S. MARSHALS)

Mr. Jones did not know very many U. S. Marshals during that time. The only one he was acquainted with was a Mr. Yoe from Fort Smith. He became acquainted with him when John Walkingstick was elected Sheriff of Goingsnake District.

(INDIAN POLICE)

Mr. Jones was well acquainted with two Indian Police, They were a Mr. Eagle, and Josh Hummingbird, who was a policeman for several years.

(BALL GAMES)

The Indian Ball game was the most important game of the day. This was played somewhat like foot-ball of today.

The games would sometimes last all afternoon. The time was not limited. The Peavine team was composed of all young men, namely; George Sanders, Flint Walkingstick, Richard Ketcher, Jack Soap, Louis Bean and Ed Walkingstick.

(MUSIC)

The Cherokees were fond of singing. Among the early day singers were Jack Soap, Esau England, John Hummingbird, Isaac Hummingbird, Ance Ketcher, Peter Hider and several others. The famous violinists of that day was Dave Blackwood, Bill Terrell and George Blackwood.

The Cherokees were fond of dancing also, so every week there would be a dance called Reel Dance. The men would line up one side and the women on the other side. The "Night Hawks" danced around a fire. The dancing places at that time were: Anderson Ketcher's, Bill Terrell's, and Stute Walkingstick's.

(INTRUDERS)

There were several white people who were intruding on the Cherokee people when John Walkingstick was sheriff. These people were sent back to their own country. At that time if a

white man wanted to live in the Cherokee Nation he had to get a permit from the proper officials or else he could not stay. If he came anyway, he was arrested and taken back. A Cherokee could get a permit from the Judge of the District allowing some white man to enter the nation. This was often done. If a white man entered into the nation by this permit, in a few years he could apply for a citizenship and it would be granted. Some of the old time white men that came to this country through the process stated are; Mr. Jim Padgett, Wash Hendricks, now deceased, and several more.

(NEWSPAPERS)

The only newspaper in the Territory was the Cherokee Advocate, which was printed at Tahlequah. This paper was printed in both Cherokee and English. Some time afterwards this paper was delivered at a new Post Office which had been established at Flint, Indian Territory. This Post Office was located where Stilwell now is. Henry Dannenberg was the Post Master.

The mail was carried on horse. The route taken by this mail boy was as follows: leaving Tahlequah, he went east, crossed the Illinois river at old Boudinot Place, then, over the Flats to the old Bee Hunter Place just below the present

town of Eldon. Then across the hills to where Titanic is now, turned south there to the Caney Creek, then up this creek to Dannenberg Place, which was at the head of said creek.

(OUTLAWS)

There were no outlaws in Peavine Community at that time. Some of the most important outlaws were Charley Proctor, Bill Pigeon, Fred and George Dunawoss, twins, who were hung about this time. Jim and John Stover were also hung for killing Wash Lee. The Stover boys were hung when Lincoln England was sheriff.

(MINERALS)

There was not much mineral in the country at that time. A little lead was found in some places. Bill Manus found a vein of this somewhere in this country. He would not tell where it was. He made his own bullets from lead that he had found.

A large amount of Spanish money was found by Ed Walkingstick while plowing on the farm that is today owned by Laura B. Ketcher, Some people estimated it at several hundred dollars. LIME was made in the south end of the Walkingstick property. William Jones now lives in Section 12, TWP 16, Ranges 25, in Adair County.