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BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Incl. Plan for History Material for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name H. M. Dreyer.

This report made on (date) May 24, 1937.

1. Name Mr. L. P. Bobo.

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete report by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and check items on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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H. M. Dreyer,
Field Worker, /
May 24, 1937.

An Interview With L. P. Bobo,
Oklahoma City.

In the latter part of 1903 I came from Wilson County, Tennessee, as a young adventurer, to see certain portions of states west of the Mississippi. I visited practically all of the towns and cities in north and west Texas, and in Oklahoma Territory and all the cities in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. I returned from St. Louis determined to see the Indian Territory part of the state, and visited friends and old schoolmates at Vinita, Tahlequah, Muskogee and Tulsa. Muskogee was the metropolis and the people of Red Fork would tell you that that village was destined to outstrip Tulsa and apparently was doing so at that time.

From Muskogee I visited on the Middleton Ranch and at the N. B. Moore home near Bixby. Mr. Moore married a sister of Miss Alice Robertson. I also visited at Clarence Turner's home in the Choska, Arkansas River, Bottoms. I witnessed the roping and

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branding of hundreds of head of horses and cattle, all done without the aid of chutes, and tying the horses to the "snub pole" with lariats and then throwing them. I have never seen since such skill with ropes as that shown by the average mixed-blood Indian or Freedman cowboy.

During May, 1904, while standing on the street in Muskogee, I saw an old friend and former teacher in front of the Commercial National Bank. I went over to greet my old teacher at Rome, Tennessee, Professor J. K. Brown. I spoke to him and he seemed embarrassed and handed me his card, upon which was written, "Cheesie McIntosh, Supervisor of Schools for the Muskogee Nation". In his soft tenor voice he repeated twice -- "McIntosh, McIntosh". Exasperated, I said, "You are not McIntosh, you are Professor J. K. Brown. I went to school with you at Rome, Tennessee". Then, he recognized me, asked about all his old friends in Smith County, including Governor Benton McMillin from said county. He then told me that when a young man he was a member of the House

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of Warriors of the Muskogee Nation and in an altercation killed his political rival and that rather than take a chance at being assassinated he went back East and taught school for twenty-five years, holding many positions of honor and trust and declining the Superintendency of Public Instruction for the State of Tennessee. Then it was necessary for him to come back and establish his identity and have his family enrolled in order that they might procure allotments. He was very cordial and inquired as to what I was doing. He stated that he knew my qualifications and asked me if I would accept a school some place in the Creek Nation. I answered that if I taught school I would like to teach in a good thriving community. About two weeks later I got a letter and a certificate to teach school in the Indian Territory, signed by him and Alice Robertson, later Congresswoman, stating that I had been selected as Principal of the school at Broken Arrow, with three young lady assistants.

During this time I boarded at the Katy Hotel and became well acquainted with Colonel Needles, a

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member of the Dawes Commission. I had assumed that the Dawes Commission was some big trading company dealing in live-stock and produce.

He mentioned that they needed some extra law clerks, engineers, and stenographers. After telling him that I was educated as a Civil Engineer, he invited me to come to his office the next day. Upon arriving, he escorted me in to William O. Beall, secretary, now attorney for the Sinclair Oil Company, who conducted me to one of the engineers who was to question me as to my qualifications. I satisfied him on a very brief examination and he gave me an oath to sign inducting me into the Indian Service as a Junior Civil Engineer. He gave me a letter assigning me to report to the Chief-Clerk of the Atoka Land Office. I wrote Cheesie McIntosh declining the principalship of the school at Broken Arrow, and showed up ten days later at Atoka.

I was then given various assignments of work; surveying for the contests divisions; checking up excessive "Holders" (allottees) of land. During this time

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I visited the Chickasaw Nation, spending a night with Samuel Healds (a merchant) at Healdton, and another night with Max Westheimer's tenant, a prosperous German, residing in section 9, township 4 north, 3 west. Subsequently these places turned out to be in the middle of the celebrated Healdton oil field.

In one assignment I was to report on the owner of ten acres of land which was being contested by Ella Lynch vs Dr. McBride, near Fort Gibson. This was a very simple matter as a little more than three acres of the ten acres were on one side of the center of the Fort Gibson Cemetery road and the other improvements were on the other side of this road. Dividing this ten acres into two parts satisfied both the contestants. It was necessary to interview both Dr. McBride and Ella Lynch.

When I called on Ella Lynch, who lived in a vine clad one story frame building, she was particularly interested in showing me her famous son's picture. She ushered me into the parlor and there was a life-sized portrait of Cherokee Bill, the famous outlaw,

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ordered hanged by Judge Parker at Fort Smith.

"He was such a dutiful, brave and chivalrous son", she said, The mother of President Roosevelt was no prouder of the President than was Ella Lynch of this famous outlaw son.

At one time "Cherokee Bill" lay in ambush on the north side of the Illinois River until an immigrant wagon containing two families crossed over. He then held up the two men in the presence of their families, taking a watch and some money from one of them. The other had nothing of value on his person and he was shot down on the theory that a man without money had no business coming into the Indian Territory.

I then acted as allotting clerk at the Atoka Land office and became well acquainted with a number of persons later prominent in the state's history. The Honorable Robert L. Williams, later governor, was very conspicuous with his rakish straw hat and his sagged and shrinking seersucker suit, while engaged in blocking up his few thousand acres of land, extending from the heart of the Black Belt (Twelve Mile Prairie) to Blue River.

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His attire and association with the "commoners" was in striking contrast with Lee Cruce who appeared with the "aristocrats" meticulously attired--white bow ties and all.

There were a few thousand Choctaw-Chickasaws and Freedmen who were followers of Chitto Harjo ("Crazy Snake") who would not select land in allotment. The law provided that if any allottee failed to appear within one year after the land offices opened, then the Secretary of the Interior should proceed to arbitrarily allot said citizen or Freedman.

A field party was to be organized to go to the Indians, the recalcitrant allottees, since they would not come to the respective land offices. This field party must subsist on the country through which it passed as the recalcitrants lived in the most remote parts of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Nations.

Several employees had been given assignments for this purpose but they never got sufficiently far away from the leading hotels and the Harvey Eating Houses to accomplish anything. There were no roads nor bridges,

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nor ferries, and very few places to obtain subsistence and lodging away from the railway towns. Some employees would go to Antlers, for instance, get a livery rig and drive out about fifteen miles and would then spend the remainder of the day driving back to find subsistence and lodging. This field party being organized must endure quite a lot of hardships and I was selected to head this party.

Andrew Gardenhire from Ardmore, a young engineer from the Townsite Commission, was detailed to assist me. We were furnished three horses with saddles and saddle bags, a mule team, and a "buckboard" to carry our equipment. The first thirty days out was spent in checking land in forks of Boggy River, as to whether or not it was suitable for arbitrary allotment.

We slept in open cotton pens on the picked cotton and feasted on venison and wild turkey every day. Our duties were to perfect the rolls of the Choctaw, Chickasaw citizens and freedmen; find out whether or not those who had died since the enrollment during 1898 and 1899 were living in September, 1902, the date

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of the ratification of the supplemental treaty. The 1898-99 enrollment was made official by the Dawes Commission. In addition there were two authentic tribal enrollments - one made in 1893, to pay the Choctaw-Chickasaw \$103.00 per capita payment, (Grass lease money) and the other called the census enrollment in 1896. All persons on these rolls had been tentatively enrolled, assuming that they were alive September, 1902. (The date of ratification of the Supplemental Treaty). A great many had died during this interim and were not entitled to allotments or per capita payments.

To find out whether they were living or not on said date was our major task, and if they were alive on said date and had not made selection of an allotment we were to proceed to arbitrarily allot them.

The law governing this was very brief. quote:

"If, for any reason, an allotment should not be selected or a homestead designated by, or on behalf of, any member or freedman, it shall be the duty of the said Commission to make said selection and designation."

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After being out about six weeks and after our work had actually begun in earnest, the responsibility of placing a great many people on lands arbitrarily looked like a big job, and I went to Muskogee to see my old friend, Colonel Needles, about this line of work. It was necessary to return from Muskogee about 4 P. M. and arriving at noon, I found the Colonel asleep in his room and didn't awaken him until about two P. M. He appeared very much disturbed at my instructions about my duties when I showed him my letter of assignment and he said with an air of great severity, "Well, what in the hell do you think we sent you out there for?" I took the hint - backed out - bade him farewell and proceeded to get the job done, not "showing up" in the Atoka, Ardmore or Muskogee Land Offices for a period of fourteen months.

I had difficulty keeping interpreters. The recalcitrants were so much in earnest that they would persuade our interpreters to leave the field parties, telling them that they, the interpreters, were traitors to their own people.

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Jeff Ward, a prominent Indian from Sugar Loaf County, resigned from the service. His successor, Louis Battiest, a full-blood from Bokhoma County and graduate of Southwest Baptist University, Clarksville, Tennessee, likewise resigned. Other local interpreters were employed but they, too, quit. We proceeded to all public places where the Indians congregated, such as protracted meetings, and attended the meetings of the Tribal Legislatures, where, from meeting people from all over the Nation, we could either find out when certain allottees had died or could be cited to someone in the vicinity where they had died; who made the coffin or assisted in burying them or preached their funeral. Thus at a meeting of the Choctaw Council at Tuskahoma we would get information that would lead us to definitely establish the deaths of Indians in all the counties of the Choctaw Nation.

There were a number of duplicate official enrollments, mostly of orphans or children from broken homes. Most of these went to the land office in Atoka and selected

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one full allotment under one name and then went to the other land office in Ardmore and selected another full allotment. Among some of these duplicate enrollments, I remember Edward Colbert, Bency Harlen, Thomas Cooper and possibly there were a hundred more.

While attempting to establish whether Edward Loman was dead or alive and, if dead, the date of his demise, I found out that the said person was already on the rolls twice and had selected two allotments. It all arose this way.

The father and mother had separated and lived in different counties. In '99 the mother appeared in Blue County and had her other children and this one enrolled. His father in Tobucksy County also had his other children including this one enrolled. In the meantime, the boy was residing with Jack Loman in Gaines County. He had placed him on Tribal rolls as his ward under the name of Edward Loman. Conclusive evidence was procured establishing these facts and in every instance the last land selected in allotment was cancelled and the name stricken from rolls.

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These allottees that were placed on the approved roll, that had died "too soon", or prior to September, 1902, caused a fertile field for fraud. Unscrupulous land men would procure affidavits showing them to have died for instance in July, 1903, when as a matter of fact, they died in July, 1901. On the strength of these fraudulent affidavits they would have an administrator or would have the surviving parent make selection of land. Some of these fraudulent allotments were cancelled when evidence showing conclusively that the persons had died prior to September, 1902, was obtained.

Jackson Jones of Sugar Loaf County, Addie O'Quinn of Sandbois County, and possibly a hundred others, were fraudulently allotted and subsequently cancelled. On the death of Jackson Jones the printed minutes of a Baptist Association Meeting showed the death at a certain date in 1901, as appeared from the report of a committee on condolences for deceased ministers. His fraudulent allotment was cancelled.

Governor Green McCurtain himself advised the writer that a fraud had been perpetrated in selection of land

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of Addie O'Quinn. Her death, prior to the supplemental treaty, was easily established from the testimony of the Governor and of a number of other prominent witnesses. These allotments were arbitrarily cancelled on the ground of "fraud ab initio" and in no instance did the land men who had acquired these tracts of land try to legally protest as the fraud was too flagrant.

The Snakes (recalcitrants) were very much imposed upon by other educated and designing allottees who would go to the respective land offices and select land upon which the improvements belonged to their Snake Indian neighbors. They would then return and advocate strongly the Snake program which in brief was to tear up the railroads, destroy the cities and towns, run all the whites and state negroes out of the nation and have the land as long as water ran and grass grew.

The object of the educated and designing allottees was to let the nine months limitation, from the time they got a certificate to this land, expire before the Snake Indian could wake up. No contest could be instituted to recover improvements after a limitation of

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nine months from the date of the certificate had run.

One prominent Indian whom the Snakes thought was their leader had selected nearly all the choice lands with improvements on Mountain Ford River, for himself and family. The field party exposed his duplicity and some of the improvements were recovered before the limitation had run.

A number of persons were arbitrarily allotted who were not in sympathy with the program of the recalcitrants. These were Choctaw-Chickasaws, confined to Federal prisons. Some prominent allottees in Washington, D. C., requested that this action be taken as did a number of incompetents all over the two nations. A number of Indians would appear at the land office, but without any knowledge of what section, township, range or sub-division they wanted to select. They were placed on the "Incompetent Roll" and their names were furnished our field party. Hundreds were minors and deceased allottees whose kinfolks were too poor to have guardians or administrators appointed by one of the tribal courts.

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A number of others were refugees from ^{the} Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations, leaving to save a penalty of thirty-nine lashes on their bare backs. This especially applied to the freedmen, who, when convicted in Tribal Court and sentenced to be publicly whipped at a given date in the future, would abscond to Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and the other Indian nations without any thought of ever returning to receive an allotment and, as they thought, the thirty-nine lashes, also.

We found a number of these scattered around in the states and Indian Nations adjoining the Choctaw-Chickasaw Nations.

The winter from January 1, to February 22, of 1905, was unusually severe. Alternate snows and sleet fell from the first of the year and covered all the trees and cane brakes with solid ice for a seven weeks period.

Finally on February 14, the temperature dropped to fourteen degrees below zero. Hundreds of cattle that had been driven from Texas to go through the winter on the cane fodder in the Red River and Little River bottoms, died on this cold night. Many hogs died, also. The

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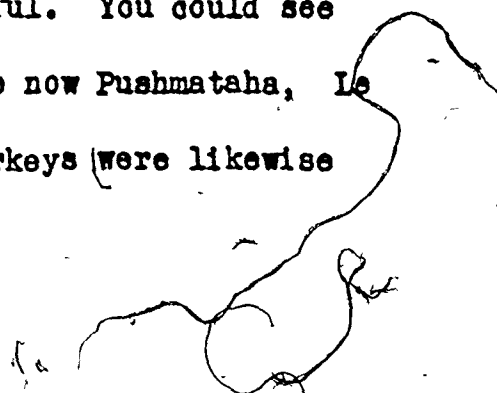
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field party found as many as twenty hogs in one bed, all frozen to death and dead cattle littered every hillside and valley. The sleet had covered the cane fodder for weeks.

While looking up some bottom land to file some Snakes on, I saw for the first time our noble American bald eagle. I was very much shocked to see him fly from the dead carcass of a cow only ten or fifteen feet away, to the top of a dead stump. My first impulse was to kill him as I had a single barrel shot gun hung to my saddle, but I was so surprised at seeing this specie and to find that he was a common consumer of carrion that I decided to spare his life. During this winter there were literally thousands of ducks slaughtered in this Red River country for their feathers. The hunters would kill a few hundred ducks and take them and pick them for their feathers and then throw them away.

Wild animals were very plentiful. You could see deer in almost any part of what are now Pushmataha, Le Flore, and McCurtain Counties. Turkeys were likewise



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plentiful and could be seen in flocks of as many as a hundred. There were some bears also for the hunters and Pierce Homer of Bethel had two or three that he had captured and William McKinney had two over near Octavia that he kept for pets. With an interpreter, I rode up to Simon Narkisha's hut one day only to find that he had just skinned a big bear and we stayed for dinner having that delicacy, bear meat. While in the vicinity of what is now southern McCurtain County, we headquartered with George Dallas, the Harris Brothers, the manager of the Jones Farm and with the Gardners at Janis. After a heavy rainfall driving away the sleet on February 22, we moved over north of Idabel and headquartered at Ex-governor Jeff Gardner's. He had a big three-story house near the giant Cypress tree which is said to be the biggest tree in the United States this side of California. Here we engaged the services of a young aristocrat by the name of Rosville C. Scott, whose father was a sawmill, livestock, and land baron with holdings extending from the Barren Fork River in Arkansas to Mountain Fork in the Choctaw Nation. He

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had been interested in rounding up his father's numerous livestock with his father's hirelings, and we enlisted his services as a guide. We were thus able to do three or four times as much work as we would have done otherwise with-out him. He knew where we could get across the numerous streams, the shallow fords, and he also knew where every Indian and Freedman in that section lived. After the sleet which lasted about seven weeks, incessant rains fell for about a month. We found ourselves water-bound at Eagletown. We could neither go to Idabel on account of Mountain Fork and Little River nor could we go to DeQueen on account of Roland Fork. Our salary checks were expected but we had no mail for three weeks. The mail carrier at Eagleton was very content to play cards all day long and not make any effort to bring the mail out from Idabel. We needed our salary and expense checks which were due from Muskogee. Finally young Gardenhire very abruptly and emphatically told the mail man that he was going to report him to the Postmaster General if he didn't make an effort to get some mail over.

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He proceeded on horseback, leading another horse, with instruction to leave all the packages and only bring the first class mail. He managed to get back across Little River but returning across Mountain Fork, the horse he was leading stumbled and fell and all the mail was thoroughly saturated, including our salary and expense checks. We dried out our checks and young Scott volunteered to take me horseback by a route around the head of Roland Fork to where we could get to DeQueen. After the checks were dried I told the boys to sign their "John Hancock" on the same and was very much surprised when we arrived at DeQueen to find that the Indian interpreter, Jacob Homer, had taken me literally as both his salary and expense checks had been indorsed "John Hancock". The banker called my attention to the discrepancy. Jacob Homer still remains in the Indian service at the Muskogee Land Office, unless recently retired.

From Bethel, Indian Territory, which was about the wildest part of the country, we sent our guide and also the interpreter by buckboard and horseback around by the "narrows" to Ludlow, while Gardenhire and myself decided


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to go due north, and save about fifteen miles. We conferred with several Indians and they advised us against it as there were no roads nor trails. They all shook their heads. But we made the trip finally arriving at ten o'clock that night at Ludlow, our destination, but it is safe to say we had walked two-thirds of the way as we had to climb one mountain and then we would have to detour twice as far to get down the precipitous bluffs always on the north side of every successive mountain. During this trip I saw two herds of wild ponies with not less than a hundred in each herd. They would snort and soon fade out of sight. We also saw eight separate herd of deer with not less than ten in each herd. This was late in March, 1905.



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DESCRIPTION OF SOME VERY PROMINENT INDIANS.

Governor Green McCurtain - Choctaw.

Height about 5 feet 9 inches. Heavy, stocky.

A gourmand. Shrewd, secretive in his plans, a great orator in his native tongue and an executor, carrying out with loyal "Lighthorsemen" and a subservient Legislature the plans and policies formulated by the determined Tribal attorneys. A Clemenceau in action.

Douglas H. Johnson - Chickasaw.

An educator, a "Beau-Brummel" in dress, a master diplomat, a "six footer" with distinguished looks and Chesterfieldian manners. The leader of the Treaty Party (National) with Wm. H. Murray and Melvin Cornish chief manipulators. See Wm. H. Murray Book, "Alfalfa Bill" Chapters 24-25-26-but everyone seemed to be pleased that he got the supplemental treaty ratified. A political "wave rider", still on top, who has earned the gratitude of his people.

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DESCRIPTION OF SOME VERY PROMINENT INDIANS.

Pleasant Porter - Muskogee.

A massive, square shouldered, bull necked man with a Bismarck head and a Diaz disposition. Could have been a South or Central American Dictator. He contributed more than any one person to the breaking up of Tribal - Communistic customs and the carrying out of the policies promulgated by the Dawes Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes.

John Brown - Seminole.

A benevolent, be-whiskered, bent, old man. A father to his Tribe. A preacher by excerpt and by example. Always intent for his peoples' best interests. A leader for a generation, only being unhorsed one time by the demagogues and staging a come-back the next election. A positive character.

Chief Buffington - Cherokee.

A physical giant. He had a considerable political background, having been a Cherokee Senator and a

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Circuit Judge. He, as well as a majority of the Cherokees, was opposed to the treaties negotiated by the Dawes Commission but accepted the same as inevitable.

I attended a few general elections. The vote was viva voce. Tickets of the two major parties were printed and handed the voters. He called aloud his choice, seldom voting either ticket straight, generally selecting the candidate with physical prowess. The big bruisers got elected. The "runts" got beaten. Physical prowess and political prestige appeared to be twins.