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Mr. J.D. Kelly

By H.L. Ramage field worker

Mr. J.D. Kelly, Riverside, Age 68, Born at Westville, Oklahoma March 4th, 1870, Quarter Cherokee.

Father's name was Wiley Kelly, age unknown, was about forty years old at death. He was born and reared around Westville, I. was about three years old when my father died.

My mother's maiden name was Sarah Phillips. She was born around Texanna, Oklahoma. She was about the age of my father when she died.

I was about eight years old when I first attended school. The school was about one and a half miles from where I lived, the school was built of log, had only one room. The logs were split with holes bored in the ends, wooden pegs were driven in at the corners to hold logs in proper place. We had no desks at all and the seats were made of split logs with sticks for legs.

The only book we had was the blue back speller. Only went to school six or eight months. Our Teacher's name was Mrs Duncan. Mrs Duncan had to go to Tahlequah for her salary.

Just after I quit going to school and during the Cherokee payment at Tahlequah, Mrs Duncan and her son Felix went to Tahlequah for her salary as Teacher. They went in a two horse wagon. They left Tahlequah intending to come to Muskogee. About half way between Tahlequah and Ft. Gibson a man about twenty five years of age, who's name was Sandus, rode his horse out in front of their team from a clump of bushes, without saying a word, just started firing his six-shooter at them killing Mrs. Duncan instantly.

Her son Felix grabbed a wenchester that he had in the wagon and killed Sanders. Felix Duncan was never tried for killing Sanders.

Another school teacher, a man about 28 years old and a stranger in that part of the country was teaching school just a short distance from where he boarded with John Rubin Leach. This man went to Tahlequah to receive his salary, come back to where he boarded. He was going to take a trip, and as he did not know the country, asked Mr. Leach to accompany him to where he could catch a stage.

Joe Starr lived a short distance from the Leaches. Mr. Starr had a pack of hounds and did a lot of hunting through the mountains, On a hunting trip a short time after the teacher left. The dogs found a mans body who had been murdered and burned; Mr. Starr reported his find to authorities at Tahlequah.

The body was indentified as that of the ~~xxx~~ school teacher who was boarding at Leaches. John Rubin Leach was tried and found guilty of the crime. He was later hanged at Ft. Smith, Arkansas.

My home was located about six mile west of Westville, Okla., it was built of log, had one room, one door and one window, the chimney at fire place was also built of log, inside the chimney was dobed with clay,. Most of the time when the mornings were cold and we had to have a big fire, the chimney would catch fire; we had a cow, a few chickens, a few hogs and a flock of sheep.

We did most of our trading at Cincennati, Arkansas. The merchants there bought the wool, we also had our grain milled at Cincinnati.

The hogs were on free range, we never penned a hog up to grain and fatten in those days, when we wanted pork to eat, would just go out and kill one, they were all fat as there were plenty of
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We didn't have to butcher many hogs as there were plenty of Deer, Turkey, Fish and other wild game. 197

We moved to Texanna, Oklahoma when I was about twelve or thirteen years old, was there only a short time when my mother died and I was taken to the Cherokee Orphan's Home. The Orphanage was located at where Saline is now located. There were nothing there at that time except the Orphanage. Mr. Joe Thompson was Superintendent of the school. There were about one hundred and fifty children in the Home. Joe Thompson is a brother of Dr. Thompson, now practicing in Muskogee.

There was a big farm at the Orphanage, men were hired to cultivate the crops. All the work that was required of the children was to cut the cord wood.

Hogs were the only kind of stock raised on the farm.

There were three or four salt springs about a quarter of a mile from the home. Indians from all over the country come to the springs and made salt. They would build a fire under a large iron kittle boiling until the water was gone leaving only the salt.

All vegetation where the salt water flowed was killed.

The Indians built a deer watch by putting up four tall poles making a square and putting a platform on top of poles, then at night the Indians would lay on top with a light of some kind that would blind the deer, in this way they were easier killed when they come up to lick the salt.

I was at the Orphans Home about two years; when I left the Home I got married and moved to a place on Coody Creek about five or six miles south east of Muskogee, and just west of where Dr. Brutons farm is now located, lived at this place forty two years.