

Interview with Percy Ladd Walker, Wyandotte
At 26 I St. SE, Miami, Okla.
By Nannie Lee Burns, Field Worker,
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THE WAMPUR STORY.

I, Percy Ladd Walker, a 1/E Wyandotte was born
at Wyandotte, Kansas, September 1, 1849.

My father, Matthew H. Walker, a brother of
Gov. Wm. Walker, was born in Ontario, Canada, June 17,
1810 and belonged to the Six Turtle Clan, Wyandottes.
His Indian name was Rah-hahn-tah-seh or Twisting the
Forest. He was one of the leading members of the
Wyandottes and noted for his hospitality to both
friend and opponent.

He was made a Mason at Upper Sandusky, Ohio.
On their removal to Wyandotte, Kansas, the first
Masonic Lodge was organized and met in his log home
on August 11, 1854. M. H. Walker was Senior Warden.
In May, 1855, he was made worthy Master and the Lodge
was authorized to meet and work under name of Kansas
Lodge 153 A T & A M. The first meeting under the
charter was on July 27, 1855.

The Eastern Star Chapter was also organized and my mother was the first worthy Matron of Lodge Mendian (Woman of the Soft Voice) John Leonard of Missouri organized it at our house. My mother was Lydia Brown Ladd, a white woman of Puritan descent. She was born in Sandusky, Ohio and married my father there.

Removal to Kansas.

When the Wyandottes removed to Kansas, my mother came with the women and children by steambóat. They landed at Westport, now Kansas City, Mo.

My father had charge of the stock. He with the other men, started in the spring, and ^{they} were three months on the way, grazing and resting their stock on the way. They crossed the Mississippi River near the St. Francis River.

After their arrival, they began selecting sites for their homes and my father chose and built our first home, a log house of four rooms and two halls, on the site where the Fowler Packing Plant now stands.

Later in 1856, he built a comfortable nine-room frame house on the same location.

Activities at Wyandotte.

My father was Probate Judge of Leavenworth County when it included the now Wyandotte County, and a member of the Kansas Territorial Legislature when the capitol was Le Compton.

Later, my father and Joel Walker organized the Wyandotte Town Co. on the Mary Walker Allotment. Isaiah Walker a cousin was treasurer and was afterwards elected to the State Senate in Kansas.

I had three sisters and three brothers and we were all born in Wyandotte. They were:

Adaline married Frank DeCrane of New York, no dependants.

Sarah H. died single.

Lillian married John Hale now in Warona, Oregon.

Thomas G. died in Wyandotte Nation, Oklahoma.

Malcolm died in Wyandotte Nation, Okla.

Percy Ladd, myself.

Clarence F. died in Wyandotte Nation, Okla.

Early Incidents of Father's Life.

Father was a member of the Council of the Wyandottes and as such was chosen as one of the party to select a new home for them after their removal from Ohio. So he, in company of several others, made their way southwest to Kansas, then through the west

visiting the various tribes. When they came to the Cheyennes, this tribe did not know them when they said they were Wyandottes, but when told that they were Nodaways, they knew them. They drifted south and east and eventually turned north through the swamps and forests. Food was scarce and bad water had weakened the party till they were almost exhausted when they came to a "crawfish hole" near a spring. They made a hole and let this fill with water and my father took a red handkerchief fastened it to a stick and crawled through grass and brush occasionally showing the red above the grass finally attracted a black tailed deer; still using the handkerchief, he managed to get within shooting distance of the deer which he killed. This meat together with good water saved the party.

Later, Father was in Washington to help arrange for their removal to Kansas as that was the location selected by the party when the British learned of father's presence and requested that he be turned to the British Government for punishment for his part in burning the British Steamer Caroline some years before. Henry Clay, a friend of my father's, came to him and told him that the request had been made for him

and seemed very sorry that they must surrender him, when my father told him, "I am a citizen of the Wyandotte Nation and free born and as such I am not subject to the laws of the government of this nation. You treat with us as an independent nation," Relieved, Clay replied he was right and this information was conveyed to those making the request. My father and a band of Wyandottes fought with Sam Houston against Mexico till the battle of San Jacinto when some misunderstanding arose and they quit and made their way to New Orleans. Among the number was a conjurer or slight-of-hand man. They managed to get into a game with a party of Mexicans and won the Mexican money. Trouble arose, his party escaped and appropriated boats and crossed the Mississippi and were then lost to pursuit and safe. In appreciation of their services, Sam Houston gave them six leagues of land. Our papers were lost and the records were burned at the capitol so when we looked it up later there was no trace of this grant.

Fallen Leaf, a Delaware Chief, often visited my father. He was a peculiar person, seldom speaking

to any one he met, appearing suddenly and leaving the same way.

The Delawares were the first tribe to see the white man's ships and they carried the news to the other tribes.

My mother was adopted into the Bear clan and I belong to the Bear clan. My name is Ta-ha-tu-ras, Split the Bear. They were not allowed to marry in the same clan. Each must marry into a different clan, tracing them through the mother.

Reading of Tribes History from the Wampum.

When I was about 11 years old, members of the various tribes gathered at Wyandotte, Kansas, to hear the complete history of the various tribes read. This meeting was called just west of Wyandotte. The reading took three days and was read from wampum, which was white buckskin in long strips 10 or twelve inches wide and in rolls.

The history was a series of pictures done in different colored inks or dyes that were fadeless. There were twelve trunks of it.

My father was one of the readers and also Interpreter. The other readers were Silas Armstrong, Frank Hicks, chief reader, and John Sarahas.

Back before the Moses transaction, over ten thousand years ago, the Glacial age forced the American Indians south. As the glacier moved southward, they kept south of it till they settled in the southern valleys, principally in the Rio Grande. There they remained till the gradual melting and receding of the glacier, though they, the American Indians, had no connection with the Indians of Mexico, south of the Rio Grande.

The Cherokees, or rather a part of them, crossed the Mississippi in canoes and spread over that country and the floods are supposed to have driven them to the higher ground where our history begins.

The balance started their trek northward and on this trek, sometimes a small band would like their new location and possibly stay behind the main body, thus creating new tribes and the climate and surroundings created different customs and gradually even a change of language.

The ice melted on the east side of the Rockies first before it did in the great central plain, but the slowness of the melting ice as they followed north, caused them to turn northeast and when they reached the

Great Lakes Region, there the coldness of the climate halted them and three tribes; Adirondacks, Abanagnawcees and Nodaways (Afterwards called Wyandottes, in English the Rattlesnakes) settled on and owned the Island of Montreal where they lived till visited by Jacques Cartier, French Explorer, whose visit caused the smallpox to break out among them, of which great numbers died, which event caused them to decide to move.

The Iroquois or Six Nations had settled in Central New York and were quarrelsome, and an unfriendly feeling existed between them and the three tribes in Montreal.

When the Nodaways (Wyandottes) started south, they crossed the Great Lakes in canoes. The Iroquois attacked them on the lakes, where a battle was fought but the Northern Tribes were the more skillful and defeated them in a battle on Mackinaw Bay.

They settled south of the lakes but had no permanent home, which caused dissatisfaction and caused bands to wander off from the main tribe. Some returned to Canada, etc.

By the treaty of 1815, they acquired land in Southern Michigan and Northern Ohio.

When the Six Nations were expelled from New York, some of the Senecas came to the Wyandottes at Sandusky and made treaties with the Wyandottes by which the Wyandottes let them settle near and gave them a reserve. The Senecas agreed never to part with the land without the consent of the Wyandottes. When the Senecas started to remove to Northeast Indian Territory, the Wyandottes followed them and made them promise that if ever the Wyandottes needed a home that they (the Senecas) would share theirs with them.

The rest is recent history and mostly correct.

The Wyandottes were named the "Keepers of the Council Fires" and these wampum rolls have for ages been intrusted to their keeping. It was brought by the Chief Tauroma from Ohio to Wyandotte, Kansas, and remained with him; and when he moved to the Wyandotte settlement in this county, he brought it with him. Tauroma was called John Hat.

Tauroma settled in Lost Creek Bottom, just east of the present town of Wyandotte, and built a log house

there, where he lived till, during the Civil War, he was forced to leave his home, and he came to ours at Wyandotte, Kansas. He and my father were friends. He left the trunks of wampum in his log home here and on leaving only sealed it the Indian way, that is, he set a heavy stick upright by the door and while this stick remains the house is locked and no Indian will enter.

Pushwhackers, lead by Hopkins, raided the Lost Creek Valley, broke open the trunks of wampum and scattered it but no one knows whether they took any of it or not.

After the Wyandottes returned, they picked up what they could find but could never get any connection to what they recovered.

Early Family Life. (Education)

My father had four scholarships in the Delaware Ohio College and my oldest brother was sent there to school but this was destroyed; and my brother Thomas G. was forced to go to war; Adaline was sent to St. Joe, Mo., to school; Sarah to Kansas City, Mo., to The Skarrett School; and I, after the common school, was

sent to Spauldings Commercial College, in Kansas City, where I graduated, Mar. 2, 1871. We were all given the best that could be had in the way of educational advantages.

Civil War Period.

We lived comfortably during this time and had plenty of money, sold our apples from our large orchard for \$3.00 per bushel. Our only privation was the lack of coffee. At one time it was two years that we could not get any and had to use parched rye. My uncle one day found secreted in the loft of one of his buildings a hundred pound bag of coffee, which they divided among us.

My father died October 14, 1860, and mother after I had settled here, though I do not know the date, but remember one thing she said before she passed on--how proud she was that she did not have a son who drank whiskey.

I am a teetotaler today, I have never drank whiskey, chewed tobacco, stole, nor told lies.

Removal to Indian Territory.

After graduating, I clerked and worked indoors and had the typhoid fever and when I recovered, my

brother, Malcolm, and I bought us a good team and a two horse wagon and thus outfitted started to Indian Territory to try outdoor life.

We started in December and when we reached Junction City south of Kansas City, it was 6 degrees below zero. Between here and Fort Scott, we ran into freighters who were hauling six barrels of whiskey. What amused me was the way they obtained their whiskey. They would push up one of the hoops and bore a small hole and when they had what they wanted they would pull the hoop back over their hole. On Shoal Creek near Baxter Springs, I tried to buy some fodder from a man who had lots but he refused to sell me any, saying that he had it all contracted and sold to some one who drove the Military Road but he added, "Damn you, go and get what you want, I won't say anything." Through Baxter down the Military Road to the Frott Place on Horse Creek, where we stayed two days, then turned northeast and crossed Grand River near the mouth of Lost Creek and reached Prairie City (Orech-
ee) Jan. 1, 1869.

The New Home.

We set about building us a house, a four-room log house and a stable, and that spring began farming and made money raising wheat as it was easy to ship from there. In addition to farming, I always had a few cattle.

I married Mary W. Audrain, an eighth Cherokee, October 9, 1873. We were married by M. H. Smith at the old Audrain Home nearby.

Malcolm later married a Mrs. Garrett, a white woman; she soon died and he returned to Wyandotte, Kan., and, restless, worked there a while; later for the Chick Brown Co., at Ellsworth, Kansas; later was interested in a silver mine in Arizona where he was froze out. He returned to Kansas City and back to Indian Territory where he died.

My first home was two miles southeast of Wyandotte but I moved in 1875 to Prairie City, where J. P. Audrain was Postmaster and I became assistant, which I continued for four years, when I was elected to the Cherokee Legislature where I served for two years.

The Downing Party was in majority. They had no name in Cherokee for Walker so they called me

Atha-Taw-He, Walk About. I was a member when our committee handled the \$6,000,000 Strip Payment and our report was accepted, without a scratch. There was \$73,000 left over and by managing, we were successful in getting this transferred to the school fund.

During the panic of 73, I lost money on my cattle. I had gone to Red River and bought 250 head of beef cattle for \$8.75 per head and sold them at Baxter for the same amount that I had paid for them. Then I turned my attention mostly to wheat.

I have always been busy and have held numerous small offices but when my wife's health began to fail, I gave up everything and devoted my time to her. She passed on about twelve years ago.

We had five children; Rex and James, who have passed on, Narcissa, Earl P. and Gleason.

When the Frisco extended to Afton from Miami, they named Narcissa for my daughter in courtesy for my permitting them to build a switch there.

Conclusion.

Mr. Walker is a very remarkable man, has an exceptionally good memory and keen mind, is quite active and now lives with his son, Gleason, in this city. (Miami).

One of his treasures is one of the two copies of the Historical Caricature of the Cherokee Nation by W. T. Thompson of Tahlequah in 1886.

He states that the only other copy that he knows of was many years ago in possession of the Vinita Leader.