

WALTERS, DAVE

INTERVIEW

#6261

47

WALTERS, DAVE.

INTERVIEW.

6261.

W.J.B. Bigby,
Field Worker,
June 15, 1937.

An Interview With Dave Walters,
Proctor, Oklahoma.

Dave Walters, a pioneer white man, was born in the state of Kansas about 1861. His parents were Peter Walters, who came from Germany about 1833, and Sarah Mapes.

His parents were married in the state of Kansas where they remained until 1873 when they came into the Indian Territory, settling near the town of Westville. Dave was twelve years old when the family came to the Cherokee Nation.

They settled on the farm of Charley Cordray, located about two miles southeast of Westville. Mr. Walters remained with his parents until he married when he was past twenty years old. Dave married Parazetta Vaughan, a white girl, and now lives at Proctor.

EARLY LIFE.

Most of his early life was spent on the farm. He was a blacksmith and a very good one, and this trade was

WALTERS, DAVE.

INTERVIEW.

6261.

-2-

what permitted him to the Cherokee Nation. There was a demand for blacksmiths at that time.

When the family moved to the Cherokee Nation they settled on a farm of about twenty-five acres. They raised wheat, oats, corn, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes and many other crops. Mr. Walters was a good manager on a farm. He always managed to raise all of the food that the family could use at home. Their home in the Cherokee Nation was a very simple home just as many other homes were at that time. The house was of log construction. It contained windows, plenty of doors and had good floors. Mr. Cordray had lived in the house himself until the Walters moved on the place. Later, when the Cordrays came back and wanted the house, Mr. Walters built another house on the farm. The logs were hauled from the Piney Mountain with ox teams, a distance of about ten miles. The lumber was hauled from Bill Ballard's sawmill on Ballard Creek. Ballard Creek was named after this early day sawmill man. Most of the tenant houses were built in almost the same way. Usually double log houses and a large hall between the rooms.

WALTERS, DAVE.

INTERVIEW.

6261.

-3-

After Mr. Walters grew to young manhood he was employed by Mr. Arch Scrapper for some time. Scrapper was a well-to-do Indian of his time. He had been an old Federal Soldier. Scrapper was a Captain of a small company of Indian Home Guards who were stationed in Goingsnake District. Mr. Walters worked for twenty-five cents per day at that time. This was considered a good wage for a single man. He worked long hours on the farm. Scrapper was a full blood Cherokee so young Walters learned how to raise real corn. The Cherokees at that time did not own large farms as we do nowadays. A farm of twenty acres was considered a large farm.

Each farm had a large cellar to take care of the produce--such as turnips, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes. Produce such as pumpkin, peaches, apples, were all dried. The Cherokees lived fine at that time. Clothing was all home-made. Spinning wheels and looms were to be found in almost every home.

SCHOOL AND CHURCH.

Dave did not receive much of an education. He finished the Third Grade in Arkansas. He went to school

WALTERS, DAVE.

INTERVIEW.

6261.

-4-

very little while they lived in Kansas and after coming to the Cherokee Nation he did not attend school at all; although there were schools near his home. John Alberty was the old teacher at this school which was located east of Westville at that time. He does not know the name of that school.

The Baptist Mission was the first church that he knows anything about; it was already well established when he was large enough to realize anything. His parents were not very much church people; sometime they would go, but most of the time they would not go to church. His father helped build the Baptist Mission after it was rebuilt to its present location. Bill Qualls and Bill Crowder were two old timers who worked on this building when it was rebuilt.

TRADING AND WILLING POINTS.

Cincinnati, Dutchtown and Siloam were the early day trading points. Cincinnati was their main town; they went to this town more than to the others. Among the early day merchants at this place are P. V. Craig and the Dotson Brothers. Craig still operates a store at Westville.

WALTERS, DAVE.

INTERVIEW.

6261.

-5-

Cincinnati was also their milling point for flour. This was also a market place for furs and hides. At this place in the fall of the year you could meet people from miles around. This was the busiest place for any town of its size Mr. Walters saw. Everything that the farmers had to sell they took to Cincinnati to market. W. H. Rhea was the early day hide and fur dealer at Cincinnati.

GAME AND FISH.

When the Walters family came to the Cherokee Nation there were all kinds of game to be found. Deer was found in droves. Turkeys were so numerous that it was impossible to raise a crop of peas because the turkeys would eat them up. Many other small animals were to be found among these rabbits, and squirrels, and all kinds of birds. Wild pigeons were so many that late of an evening there would be so many going to their roosts that the sky would turn dark while they passed overhead. The killing of these pigeons became a business later.