

WALFERS, COLONEL M. INTERVIEW

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Goldie Turner,
Field Worker.

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Interview With Mr. Colonel
E. Walters, Skedee, Okla.
6-22-37.

Colonel E. Walters was born in Adrian, Illinois, in 1865. He came to Oklahoma in 1886.

I believe I can lay claim to being the oldest living resident of Oklahoma. My father received the first permit from the United States Government to come to Oklahoma, (Indian Territory) as Indian farmer for the Cherokee Indians. At that time there had been only five permits issued to white people to come to Oklahoma. Of these, two were Civil War veterans permitted to hunt and trap in the Indian Territory and the other two were permitted to enter to establish trading posts. They were all elderly men and I was only eight months old when my father came to the Indian Territory.

He was stationed at the little town of Choteau on Mud Creek, north of Tulsa. So since all of those other persons, who got permits at the time my father did are dead I feel that I am the oldest living resident.

All my life I have been collecting souvenirs of my experiences and each article you see here in this room has a bit of personal history attached to it. I have only to look around this room to bring back personal experiences of my life.

See those buffalo horns hanging over there. That is one of my earliest souvenirs. Those are the horns of the last

living wild buffalo that I ever saw. I was six years of age and went with my father on a buffalo hunt with an old buffalo hunter companion. One morning early as we were eating breakfast, three buffaloes were sighted close to our camp. The men killed one a piece and I begged so hard for the horns of the one that father killed that he finally chopped them out for me and I saw that they were put in the wagon when we started home.

Soon after this the different Indians tribes decided they would hold a sale of their marriageable girls. Word was sent out among the Indians and the twenty-seven different tribes gathered at Anadarko. A big brush arbor was built. In the center was placed a bright blanket. Each chief would call out a girl of his tribe and auction her off for ponies. No one but single Indians were allowed to bid and the marriage ceremony was performed as soon as the transaction was made. Some sold for a few ponies while some brought as many as fifty ponies apiece.

It was here that I got that big Indian headdress that you see hanging in the corner. It belonged to the son of Sitting Bull. I was the only white child there and the Indians vied with one another in making over me. I could understand some of the other Indian languages and could talk Cherokee fluently so I was never afraid of any of the Indians. When I saw the feather headdress I immediately

wanted it. The chief took it off, made it smaller and put it on my head. It drug fully three feet behind me. Of course I wanted to keep it. He was reluctant at first, but finally gave in and gave it to me.

A year or so after that I was with my father when we came upon two men who had been in a fight. One was dead and the other badly cut up. My father questioned the man, then took him back to town with him. While father was questioning him I was looking around. I soon saw a sharp steel knife. It was covered with blood but I picked it up and put it in my pocket. It was used as evidence at the trial in Coffeyville, but as soon as the trial was over I had been eying it as it lay on the table by the judge. I edged over and picked it up. The judge only smiled as I went away. You can see it there at the top of those arrow heads for it was made from a steel head like the one just below it.

When I was nineteen I was appointed United States Marshal and held this office till statehood. Then for a time I was not an officer. The two officers appointed could not talk Indian. The Indians kept coming to me with their grievances and wanting me to help them. I told them there was nothing I could do but a year or two later I was appointed special United States Marshal with jurisdiction all over Oklahoma which office I have continuously held to the present time.

I have a number of outlaw guns. Among them is the gun carried by Jesse James. I had seen it many times for the James and Younger boys had been our neighbors before we came to Oklahoma and the boys later often came to our house to stay when I was a child. This gun was originally an old cap and ball repeater but with the few changes made that I will show you, he was able to use the manufactured shells. The changes were so simple that the gun could be easily reloaded in the dark.

The old rusty gun here also belonged to an outlaw. In fact I was wounded with it. The outlaw was later captured and he threw his gun in a creek. I later found it. It is as you see loaded but so rusty that it would be impossible to fire it.

Here on the table in this big book is a scrap book of my life. I have pictures of myself and others who were related in some way in my activities. There you see a picture of the Dalton Boys. I have several of myself taken under the million dollar tree at Pawhuska. As you see I have taken clippings from the various newspapers concerning my activities. Many of them are about the sale of leases that I have auctioned off for the Osage Indians.

I am the only white man ever awarded a medal by the Osage Indians. Here in this little book of trophies you see a picture of it. At the same time I received it I

was also given a tiny replica of the famous Pershing gold sword made from scraps of the big sword.

Comments.

Mr. Walters did not have time to give me a history of all the early day mementoes that he has. It may be possible to get another interview with him at some later time. He has a marvelous collection of not only Indian bead work and arrow heads, but stuffed birds and animals as well.