

WATTS, GEORGE WASHINGTON

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Charline M. Culbertson, Interviewer
Indian-Pioneer History
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Interview with George Washington Watts,
444 So. Second Street, McAlester, Oklahoma

I came to the Indian Territory, Chickasaw Nation,
close to the Red River at Burneyville in the year 1884.

A friend by the name of R. W. Cypert and I came
from Colorado to the Territory. We came by railroad
but as the fare in Colorado was ten cents a mile we could
not afford that so we came on a freight train.

The reason I came to the Territory was that I had
relatives here so I came to work as a hired hand on
Sisco Long's farm. He was located one mile from Burney-
ville where there was one store and a post office. This
town was named after two Chickasaw Indian brothers by the
names of Ed and Wess Burney. They were big land holders
of this vicinity.

We had a little church and school. I do not remember
who the school teacher was but I do know that both Indian
and white children attended this school. It was a sub-
scription school.

Our home was a little box house.

I also operated a grocery store for two years. I
hailed my supplies by wagon and team from Fort Smith,

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Arkansas.

I crossed Red River many times on the ferry but I do not remember who operated the ferry.

I always attended the camp meetings which we had for two or three weeks at a time.

I remember when the place where Ardmore is today was just a prairie and I have seen packs of wolves and droves of prairie chickens out on the prairie. I would be unable to tell of the building of Ardmore, however.

In 1884, they passed a law that a ranchman had to pay one dollar a head for cattle to run on the range. A ranchman by the name of Bill Washington, a white man, refused to pay so some Chickasaw Indians went down and rounded up his cattle and were going to hold them until he paid. This made Bill Washington angry so he got some cowboys to steal the Indians' horses and took the horses into the Arbuckle Mountains and killed them and because of this the Indians had to let the cattle scatter. The Indians had to walk back to Tishomingo.

There were three outlaw brothers called the Shipman boys who went into the western country. They would steal horses and then return to the Territory and trade for

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cattle. One brother finally killed one of the other two and then the two survivors fought it out and killed each other.

Upon leaving Burneyville I moved to Healdton where I worked for Tom Overstreet who was a merchant. Mr. Overstreet bought and sold cattle and cotton and I was employed by him as a foreman in looking after his cotton interests. I would haul the cotton to Gainsville, Texas, where it would be sold. I have returned to the Territory with as much as a thousand dollars and I was never molested.

From Healdton I moved to Eufaula where I served two years as City Marshal. It was here that I arrested Ed Julian when he killed General Dunlap. When I heard the shots I ran to Ed Julian's place and found General Dunlap lying in his door. At the trial he managed to prove that General Dunlap came to kill him and that when he went to the door, he opened it to find General Dunlap standing there with a gun so shot him in self defense. After this Julian went to the western part of the state and made a fortune in the oil business and then went to China where he died as a pauper. His body was cremated and his ashes were brought to California.

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After leaving Eufaula I went to Broken north of
Quinton. I then later moved to McAlester where I have
been living for the past twelve years.