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Jas. S. Buchanan
Investigator
January 29, 1938

Interview with George Whitmire (Cherokee)
515 South 8th Street, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

I was born January 22, 1877, in the Coo-wee-scoo-wee
(Indian name of Chief John Ross) District, Cherokee Nation,
about two miles northeast of the town of Hayden.

My father was Joshua Whitmire, full blood Cherokee, who
was prominent in political affairs of the Cherokee Nation
and my mother was Rachel Robins Whitmire, full blood Cherokee,
the daughter of Johnson Robins who served several terms in the
Cherokee Senate from the Goingsnake district, being elected
his last term in 1883, and Sarah Hummingbird who was of a
prominent Cherokee family.

My parents were married in the early 70's and soon there-
after moved to the Coo-wee-scoo-wee district where my father
established a very large claim on Lightning Creek northeast
of Hayden where he engaged in farming and stock business.
His ranch consisted of more land under fence than any other
stock ranch in the northeast part of the Indian Territory
in those days.

There were seven children in our family; four boys, including myself, and three girls. We were reared on that place and attended a Cherokee National School known as the Lightning Creek School, which was a log structure about 16 X 20 feet, situated about three miles from our home. The seats in this old school were benches about six feet long with ends and back rests made of split and hewn boards of black walnut. A Delaware Indian Baptist preacher by the name of Adams preached at this place for several years. During my time attending school there, a white lady by the name of Miss Cummings was the teacher.

During the earlier years of my boyhood my father was my greatest outdoor companion until his death, which was caused by being thrown by a wild horse when I was nine years of age. I can remember of father taking me with him on trips to different places in the Territory. He would place me on his horse behind him, and I rode in this fashion with father until I became large enough to ride a horse myself. I recall one instance when father took me with him to a Delaware payment which took place at what was known as Campbell's store, or Alluwee post office, at that time

situated about eight miles southeast of where the town of Nowata now stands. Alluwee was quite a popular place in that sparsely settled country at that time as it was at the home place of Isaac Journeycake and the old Journeycake Delaware stomp ground. There was a very large crowd there and the payment lasted two days, and as the payment was made in money, no checks, therefore the Indians all had ready cash. The evening after the payment was completed the Delawares proceeded to celebrate the occasion with a dance at the stomp grounds and otherwise. As usual on such occasions the bootleggers were there and many of the Indians began drinking, later resulting in several fights, while others in a more cheerful and hilarious mood amused themselves by firing their guns into the air, apparently trying to shoot off all the treetops. I remember father saying to a friend that he was going home before someone shot his boy, referring to me.

My boyhood days were of the average experiences of a Indian boy of those days. There was an abundance of wild game in this country then, such as deer, wild hogs, turkey, prairie chicken and quail, also fur bearing

animals such as fox, coyote, coon, opossum, mink and skunk. I did quite a bit of trapping when I was a boy as I always found a ready market for my pelts. I never owned a gun of my own during my younger days and the only gun father had was a ten gauge muzzle loading shot gun, and every time I would shoot it I would feel as though my shoulder was unjointed from the kick of that old gun. Every time I would use it, my shoulder would be so sore I could hardly move it for a day or so, but the prairie chickens were so plentiful and my shoulder would get to feeling all right so I could not resist the temptation and I would indulge in the torture again.

I recall an incident that occurred when I was about 16 years of age and was working for W. S. Hyatt, a white man who had our ranch leased after the death of my father. I was riding over the range one morning in search of some cattle that were missing from the herd and was riding along through the tall prairie grass, expecting nothing to happen, and like a flash, a fawn about half grown leaped up out of the grass in front of my horse. I was riding a very fast horse, and the instant the fawn leaped up and started

I put the spurs to my horse and took after it. Taking my lariat from my saddlehorn, by the time the horse came into position I threw and caught the fawn with his neck and one foreleg in the noose which made a nice safe throw of the deer. I leaped from my horse and proceeded to tie him up, but believe me it is a much harder job tying a deer than it is a steer for they can handle their feet so fast and their little hoofs are almost like a knife when they strike. I managed to loop and tie his feet without his breaking a leg, got him all tied up good, placed the little fellow on my horse and took him to the ranch. I put a stake rope on him so he could not hurt himself, then unhobbled him. After a day or so his spell of fright gradually left him and he began to drink warm sweet milk which I would feed him when we milked the cows. He soon became accustomed to his situation and looked forward to feeding time morning and evening; he would watch for me as I came from the milk lot. He would run to the end of his rope and surge against it trying to meet me when he would see me with his bucket of milk.

After keeping him on a stake rope about one month he had become such a pet I put a little sheep bell on him and after he became accustomed to the bell I turned him loose and let him run at liberty about the place. He would follow me every step and was the greatest pet I ever had. He would go away into the nearby woods and would be gone sometimes most of the day but would always come back home in the evening. On one occasion in the evening after one of his days' absence from the place, my mother was on the back porch of the home and saw the deer out back of the corral and called for me to come and see what he had with him. Other members of the family and I went out on the rear porch and there was Buck, the deer, with three other deer he had brought home with him. As soon as the wild deer saw us they broke into a wild dash back for the hills. My deer stood there with his head high in the air, watching them as they disappeared in the timber as though he was wondering what they had to fear and why they ran away. After they had vanished from view, he came on to the house, apparently very disgusted. Finally his trips to the hills became more frequent and his absence from home

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much longer, first staying away over night, then later two or three days at a time. Realizing that it was only a matter of time until I would lose him entirely, we killed and butchered him before some hunter had a chance to shoot him.

When I was a boy, the country in the vicinity of our home was all open country, there being no settlement between our place and the Kansas line except a stock ranch owned by Dave Romine. There is a high circular mountain about fourteen miles north of our old place which was known as Blue Mound, now known as Centralia Mountain as the little town of Centralia was later established about one mile west of this mountain which is the highest point in northeastern Oklahoma.

I remember when there were a great many antelope in that part of the country, one old buck especially which for several years could often be seen on the highest point of Centralia Mountain, known by the early Indians as Look-out Point, standing up there like a statue, observing the surrounding country. Henry Wolf, a Cherokee who lived near old Dog Creek court house, had a bunch of hounds and

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with them made several attempts to run the old antelope down, but always without success. Several times Henry Wolf took his pack of hounds and put them on the trail of this wise old antelope and about the only sight they would get of him was when they jumped him up, as he would dash away and out-distance them so quickly, covering enough trail in a short time for the hounds to run on all afternoon. After he had led them on a broad circle from the highest point of the mountain, he would circle back and soon you could see him on Lookout Point watching the pack of hounds at long range. If anyone ever got a shot at that antelope I never heard of it.

My mother spent the remainder of her life on the old home place, departing from this life in 1900 at the age of 51.

After the death of my mother, my step-father, not being a Cherokee citizen or having any Indian rights, left the Territory and went back to Kansas, his native home.

I, the oldest of the family, my sister, Eliza, who is now living in Phoenix, Arizona, and my sister, Bettie

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Whitmire Rogers of Muskogee, are the only living members
of the family.