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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Major Project Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) April 26 and 27 1937

1. Name W. O. Williams

2. Post Office Address Henryetta, Oklahoma, Route 2.

3. Residence address (or location) Sec. 23-10-12

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 7 Year 1895

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Jerry Williams Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father lives in Wetumka.

7. Name of Mother Rosey Ann Taylor Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 18.

There will be about six more, later.

Field Worker: Grace Kelley  
April 26 & 27, '37

Interview with W. O. Williams  
Route 2  
Henryetta, Oklahoma

Born Nov. 7, 1895  
in Missouri

Name of Parents: Father, Jerry Williams,  
Missouri.  
Mother, Rosey Ann Taylor,  
Missouri.

#### INDIAN AND PIONEER MEDICINES

Redroot: beat the roots up good and put them in a pot of clear water but don't let ferment. Let it set overnight and drink for malaria or Chills.

Blackberry Root: boil like greens, strain and take for Diarrhea.

Cascara: grows wild, gather the bark and fix it like Sassafras. It's a good laxative. I have fifty pounds of it in the house now.

Sassafras: For high-blood pressure. Gather the root and bark in February and March. Make a strong tea, you can sweeten it if you like, and whenever you get thirsty just take a drink of Sassafras tea. You will see how it

helps High-blood pressure. Don't drink anything else, tea nor water while taking this treatment.

It took about twenty-four hours to get a doctor in the Henryetta District, so everyone had to know what to do in case of sickness. The only ones we could get at all were the "riding doctors" who went on horseback. A rig couldn't get over the ground.

Mrs. Cass Compton, who lived at the Tie Camp, was one they almost worked her to death. She is dead now.

#### Indian Hunting Ground

In the old days each family would have a hunting ground. It would reach back from his house to the river or mountain or some such boundary, regardless of who owned the land. It would be by agreement. And we wouldn't hunt on the other's hunting ground. We would call it a "hunting claim." The oldest man would be the Head and everybody would listen to what he had to say; they weren't like they are now, he was the oldest so he knew most. He would have a ball ground where the men and women played. When we would have a ball game the men would hunt for two days and the women would make Sofkey. We'd all, men and women, play ball in the morning. The old persons would

sit around and talk about the past. In the evening we would eat.

Tal-lie Maussie Yahola, not Tul-ma-chussie, was our Old Man or Head.

The Tallie Maussie Springs are: Sec. 15-13-12. North of John Ben's place is the Tallie Maussie Allotment, east of Okemah.

We used to call the town of Dustin, in Okfuskee County, "Spokogee" it was tough, plenty tough.

When a merchant would order a bill of goods, it would be sent to him in one box. This merchant at Spokogee ordered some corn meal, chops, wheat meal and the like. It was all sent in a box as big as this Ford Coupe.

One night some tough fellows broke in and stole this box. It was thought that they were making whiskey, to want that much of that kind of stuff.

About a week later Dad was deer hunting on Big Ben's place, 2 mi. east,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mi. north of Sec. 23-10-12, where the lake ran into Bad Creek, it was a solid mass of underbrush. You couldn't get through except by a hogtrail. He found the box of stolen meal, chops and bran. The Indian's

hogs had rooted into the box and scattered some but the most part was in good condition. Dad came back to the Tie Camp, which was located on Tallie Maussie's place, and got McLaughlin, who had a big span of mules and hauled ties for everybody, to go with him and get this big box. He gave McLaughlin all of the wheat, bran and chops for hauling it to the house.

The two men, who had stolen the box in the first place, found the tracks and took the measurements of both the mule tracks and the men's tracks, with sticks. They tracked the mules to McLaughlin's tent in the Tie Camp. One ate dinner and had cornbread, made of this cornmeal, at our house. The other ate at McLaughlin's place and sat on a sack of bran for a chair. After they ate dinner they gave McLaughlin just twenty-four hours to load up and vacate, and to never be caught in this part of the country. He didn't wait for the twenty-four hours but loaded up right then and pulled out immediately. I've never heard of him since.

I don't know who they were, we would have been afraid to ask for they were plenty tough.

Another time when Dad was hunting in that neck of the woods, he saw seventy-five or a hundred wild turkeys

feeding on about fifteen bushels of sprouted corn that someone was getting ready to make whiskey out of.

#### Indian Funerals

The Indians believe in witch-craft, or as they would say, evil spirits.

Church people keep the body in the church all night with the coffin open, they have lights burning to keep the spirits away. They hold services continually until the last clod of dirt is thrown on the grave. If the grave is dug the day before the funeral, they guard it until the body is put in it. There may be four or five or there may be twenty-five or thirty Indians who sit around and talk. But someone will be there all the time. They can come and go whenever they want to but they never leave the grave alone. Candles or lights are burned at the grave, also.

After the dirt is put in the grave they go and get all of his clothes and belongings (a full package of smoking tobacco, some bread and butter sandwiches and his keepsakes were put in the coffin before burial). They build a house over the grave, then get the clothes and

shoes, which have been tied in a sack, and tie them in the top of the house.

#### Graves

~~The Church members bury in the church yard, the~~  
Stomp Indians bury in their own yard or family cemetery, the ones who don't belong to either Stomp or Church bury on the McDaniel Watson allotment, N $\frac{1}{2}$  of SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 15, T10, R12. There are seventy or eighty graves there.

#### Hutchechuppa Church

Hutchechuppa is a Methodist Church on Old Wash Riley's allotment, W $\frac{1}{2}$  of SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 13-10-12. It belongs to his heirs now and they are having trouble about it. There is an old cabin there.

#### Old Cabin

When I was a little boy Willie Brown was fifty-three years old, and he told me it was an old house when he was a little boy. It must be a hundred and fifty years old.

#### Old Gun

One time when I was working over there I went up in the attic and found an old, old gun and plane. They



were about a hundred years old. The Deacon of the Church has them now.

#### Graves

Smith or Smitco Riley was the last owner of the place. The most noted person buried there was Cornelius Brown. They had a tombstone made for him, and it had his picture made in china, like dishes are made of, and put on his tombstone. Not long ago a white child took a rock and broke the picture. Cornelius Brown was well thought of by both Muskogees and Seminoles (Similones).

#### Church Going Indians

There were just two churches in this neighborhood, 10-12. I think some of the younger Indians have joined the white churches of different beliefs but not the old ones. Church is held one Sunday in one of the Methodist churches and all the other Methodists come to visit. The next Sunday belongs to another church and we all go there and all around and back to the first church. The same way with the Baptist churches. Every fourth Sunday church will be held in the same church, not counting by months but Sundays. Always the same church would have that particular Sunday, so the people would know where to go.

## Church Locations

Thewathle, Methodist Church - three miles south,  
one mile west of 23-10-12. Williams Home.

Weogufke, believe its Methodist - two miles west,  
one and one-half south of Hannah.

High Spring, Methodist Church - five miles south  
of Okemah.

Hutchachuppa, a branch of the Alabama, Baptist,  
at Weleetka - west  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of 13-10-12.

Thlop Thocco, Baptist - four miles south and one  
mile east of High Spring (9 miles south and 1 mile east  
of Okemah).

Sand Springs, Baptist, four miles east and a fourth  
mile north of High Springs.

Alabama Baptist Church, the old original or mother  
church of all these Baptist Churches - three blocks west  
from Weleetka City Hall, then one mile north and a half  
mile west.

There are other churches but these are the ones I  
know about. Visitors must not bring food. The members  
used to go hunting for meat, now they take money out of  
the treasury and buy meat from someone, or take the money  
and go to town to buy it.

Do you understand that the meeting starts Friday night and lasts until Sunday night?

The Indian's Friend Eats with Him.

If you have an Indian friend and are at his house at meal time and he asks you to eat, you'd better eat, for if you excuse yourself, thinking that you are imposing, and leave, he will never like you again. You were no friend of his or you would have eaten with him.

Indian Ball Game

They camp three days before the big dance. Three or four families come in today, there may be a hundred families come in tomorrow. The children dance around the fire till twelve o'clock in what they call the "Kid Dance". Everyone except the Medicine Makers eats a big supper and goes to bed.

The Medicine Makers don't eat anything and don't stay with their family. They take their blankets inside of that marked circle until daylight. They they fold their blankets and lay them on some benches, made of split logs and put in a circle around the fire, and sit on the blanket except when it is time to make medicine. Twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon they take

the medicine and go to the sacred place and vomit, then come back and sit down again. Neither eating nor drinking during the twenty-five or thirty hours of taking medicine, not only the day of actually taking it is counted but the night as well.

When they start to take medicine they line up and take partners, and keep the same partner throughout. They have this medicine in a big pot with a gourd dipper in it, which holds about a half gallon. If your partner dips the dipper in and drinks one dipperful, you dip it in and drink one dipperful. But if he can drink a lot, and ~~kept~~ <sup>keep</sup> dipping it in and drinking, you have to drink as much as he does, somehow you have to get it down, even if it's three gallons. You can't go anywhere without him and you can't leave the Stomp Ground without permission from the committee, who watches the men who take the medicine.

If I see that my cattle are out, over there about a quarter of a mile and in plain sight, I can't go put them up. I have to go to the committee and tell them that I am afraid that they will get into somebody's cornfield and do them damage and want to go and put them up. He will either go with me or appoint someone

to go with me to put up my cows.

There is a Chief and three committees. They sit there all morning and then after they take the first dose in the afternoon, every man must carry a load of wood to the camp for every dose of medicine he has taken. The partners go together, they may have to go a half mile or more. It doesn't matter what kind of wood it is, they find trees that have blown down, broken limbs, and any kind just so that it is wood. They must carry all of the wood before it is time to take the last dose of medicine, which is the fourth. Then they take it and go and vomit again, each dose of medicine makes them vomit. Then they can walk around the ground until about forty-five minutes or an hour after the last time they vomit.

The ball sticks have been hung up on a long pole. The medicine takers go and get two ball sticks, it doesn't matter whose, and run to the creek, two and two, partners together. It may be half a mile to the creek, then jump into it without clothes, just a britch-clout on. Four times they must duck themselves under the water. Then wash the ball sticks and hang them on a tree or lay them

on a log but the ball sticks must never touch the ground, the britch-clout musn't touch the ground either. When these sticks are made they have medicine put on them and the women must not touch them, at any time, neither at home nor anywhere else as this medicine is injurious to the female sex.

After the swim they march back and put the sticks where they got them. Then they are ready to eat after having done without food for twenty-five or thirty hours.

Meantime, there was a special medicine made for the women and children. It was made before the medicine for the men was made. At seven forty-five, the women drink a pint cupful. From ten years old down, the mothers take a special wash pan and wash the children's faces, hands and feet. Then they go down to a separate place on the creek and swim and bathe the children. Then they come back to camp and start cooking, and cook the entire day.

If it was a big town there had been about four beeves eight or ten big hogs weighing 250 or 300 pounds, butchered and scattered among the different camps, about a hundred camps, to be cooked that day. It is distributed to every camp that way so that one camp won't have to do all of the

work.

The medicine men eat first, they eat a little at this camp, stand around and joke and talk for awhile, and go on to the next camp. While they are at the second camp the people of the first camp start eating. That is repeated until they have eaten at each camp. The visitors go to one camp after another and everyone eats until there is nothing left to eat. It is about five o'clock when the medicine men start at the first camp and its getting dark when they get through. Then it is time for the dance.

All who take medicine must dance everytime they dance. The committee watch you, if you slip out and get drunk, they fine you \$5.00 and you have to pay that to the chief. If you go to a woman, its \$5.00, or they hold you and take your hat or clothes or whatever you've got till you pay.

All of the Indians dance, women, children and visitors, but no whites nor negroes (I'll tell you about that later) till about nine forty-five. The medicine men start and others follow.

From nine forty-five on is the medicine dance. In English, I would say, it was a stag-dance. The Chief comes with a stick about three feet long, with three balls on the end of it. They are about the size of a golf ball.

The Chief will run around the fire three times, we run to where our clubs are and if anyone gets in the way, they get run over. The committee watch to see that no women or children get in the way for they would be killed. If one of us stumbles he can't get up for someone will run over him before he can rise. They will all pass over him and he will jump up and follow after them, feeling no pain, because of the medicine they have taken which is to keep them from feeling pain. Once a committeeman who was supposed to be in front, fell down and we ran over him and then he jumped up and came on behind instead of in front. The ball dance is at 9:45, 12:00 and 4:15 in the morning.

In the morning they have the Old Man Dance. Opunka Chuli. It begins just as it gets daylight and lasts an hour and forty-five minutes. A real slow dance around the fire and then around the women's ball ground and back until sunrise. After sunrise they go to the creek again just as at the beginning. In September the water is really cold, and when a person would be wringing wet and hot from dancing, it would be like falling into an ice box, it seemed that it would split you open.

You don't eat any breakfast but choose up sides, when it was going to be a match game among yourselves. Somebody



is always wanting to fight so you just knock him out, drag him over under a shade tree and go on with the game in peace.

A-Match Game of Indian Ball 1920  
The A-tas-ses Against the Arbecas

There is a dividing line south of Weleetka. All of the towns north of this line are under Arbeca, which is their Head. All on the other side of the dividing line are under the A-tas-se Tribe or Town. When the two Head Towns are going to play ball they pick the best, toughest men of each Town or tribe to play. Twenty-one real players and some for substitutes, in case some of their best ones get knocked out.

Everybody bets everything they can on their players, either money or if they haven't any money they bet their horses, wagon, clothes or whatever they can dig up to bet.

In 1900 the A-tas-se and Arbeca game was peaceful and they matched the 1920 game then, and hadn't played each other since then. But in 1920 they never did throw the ball, but just went to fighting. Each had a player that the other didn't like for he was mean. They quarreled awhile and the longer they talked the worse it got. And instead of throwing the ball they went to fighting.

In the beginning they were camped four miles apart. Each Chief had a messenger and when he wanted to send a message to the other camp, he could depend on this messenger getting the message to them and back. Arbeca sent word that they wanted to play peaceful ball, but A-tas-se sent word back that if they came on the Ball Ground A-tas-se would run Arbeca off. At nine in the morning Arbeca sent us word that if we came on the Ball Ground we would sure have to fight for it. The A-tas-se boyse surely got "riled" up. Forty-two players were all who were to play. But when they started to fight with their clubs, which had medicine on them, all the other Indians ran to their wagons, which had the sticks without medicine that were always taken along, some got one club and some got two. Each side had a wagon of undoctored sticks close to their goal; two are used by each player in a game. The women joined in by throwing sand, pepper or anything they could get their hands on in the faces of the other side, so their men could whip them, knock them out while they were blinded. There was a big white man, Walter Scott, who was taller than any of the rest of us. I was fighting but I had to get to one side and laugh at him. He had just one stick, he'd stand there and look

over the heads and when he'd see one of the enemy, he'd reach over and tap him on the head, like a crane getting a minnow, and he'd fall like he was dead. A-tas-se ran Arbecas about a mile and came back to their goal, when they came back to their goal they saw the Arbecas coming toward their own goal like a swarm of hornets, women and all. They had another fight and the Arbecas were run three miles and didn't return.

Wash Proctor was an A-tas-se Police.

Sant Watson was an Arbeca Police.

Wallace Cook is my brother-in-law's cousin. He was in that game on the A-tas-se side.

Watie Moffer is my sister's husband and I stayed with him so much that I joined the town that he belonged to. I'm one-fourth Cherokee. Watie Moffer is a full-blood (Creek) Muskogee.

#### Three Balls Have Different Uses

There are three balls on the stick the Chief dances with. Each has a different covering with a different meaning. One cover is made of the hide off the neck of a hardshell turtle. If it is a hot, dry summer we play with that ball and it will rain before the next morning, usually that night. One time it stormed and tore down a great tree right at the edge of the ball ground.

One cover is made of the deerskin, because the deer is the fastest runner that there is, whoever catches that ball and runs with it is supposed to have the speed of the deer. And they surely can run fast, too.

The other is just common, either calf skin or something like that.

All have been doctored with the medicine and the women can't touch them. The things used in those games are just to be touched by the men. The things that the women can play with are doctored.

That medicine is a secret and I can't tell you what it is made of. (Mr. Williams says that he is a medicine man).

The women play at a different ball ground, which has the Cow's Head Pole (a cow's head or skull on a pole). The scores are different and sometimes the women don't use sticks but catch the ball in their hands.

If you belong to a Town (Stomp), you belong to it as long as you live. You may join a church but you still claim that one as yours.

White people or negroes are unwelcome and I'll tell you why. The Stomp is our religion, we believe in that, and all the songs and chants, that seem like a noise to you, are

words or songs about the stomp or ground, like your church songs are about your belief or church. The ones who are friendly don't know what it is all about and are just mimicking what they see but don't understand or believe. The others are just curiosity seekers and come to see a show or make fun.

The old original Hickory Ground is one mile and a quarter southeast of Elmer Folwer's store, Salem. The old wreckage is still there if it hasn't been picked up and sold for junk, lately. It had a store and everything a new town would have but nobody owned anything; it was all owned by the town.

#### Hog Raising

Everybody had hogs, and everybody had their own mark but we never bothered about stealing. There was plenty for everybody. Whenever a man wanted to butcher he gathered up a bunch of hogs and butchered them. If he got one of mine it was all right. When we were in the woods hunting and found a hog with little ones we put our mark on them regardless of who had the mother marked, nobody said anything about it, nor cared.

The Choctaw Nation still has free range and we have to fence against the hogs but don't fence the hogs in.