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WILLIAMS CHARLIE, C. P. INTERVIEW

5891

FIELD WORKER NANNIE LEE BURNS
 Indian-Pioneer History 2-149
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INTERVIEW WITH C. P. CHARLIE WILLIAMS
 Miami, Oklahoma
 Route 1, 1

My mother, Margaret Parks, a Shawnee, was born at
 Lawn-ston and raised in Ohio and came with her parents to
 eastern Kansas. Her father was William Parks, a brother
 of Joseph Parks, a one time chief of the Shawnees.

My father, Richard Delton Williams, of white parentage,
 was born in Tennessee and moved with his parents when small
 to Boonville, Missouri. Later he freighted from Independence,
 Missouri, west and as far south as Santa Fe New Mexico. Some-
 times there would be as many as twenty-six wagons in one train
 and they drove six to eight, either mules or oxen.

My parents were married nine miles south of Kansas City.
 In the spring of 1869 my cousin and I drove our stock here from
 Lawrence, Kansas, and we lived in a tent till Father with help
 could build a small log house. The first well was not good
 later so we dug another with no better results. I chilled
 all summer and had the malaria. That fall, my father traded

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two Texas cows and calves and two ponies for the site of the old Williams home one mile south and two west of Miami, now owned by John Robinson. Our first location was three miles southwest of this place.

I had four sisters and two brothers of whom two sisters, Eliza Audrain of Fairland, also Melissa Audrain of Fairland and a brother, Alonzo Williams who lives about two miles east of Miami, are still living.

EARLY LIFE

The home built that fall consisted of two log rooms and an entry way. We had no near neighbors and the nearest home at this time was the Frank Conner's home about nine miles away at the south bank of what is now Connor bridge, northeast of Fairland and the shed and long shack almost due east of us at the Pooler ferry was then the crossing for the old military stage. This building was on the south side of the Missouri river.

A CATTLE DRIVE

At that time we farmed some but my father always raised and sold cattle and most of my early days were spent in the saddle. We had timber north and east of

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us to the Neosho River. Cole creek was just a little way west of the house and south and west of us was open prairie for miles. Rather soon added to our house, making it a six room dwelling.

EARLY ROADS

The Military Road from Baxter Springs to Fort Gibson had already been established. To this was added after we came, the Chetopa-Wayesville Road running from Chetopa, east and south. At the creek near our house later they branched and one branch went almost due east through the valley to the Pooler Ford where it connected with the Military Road. This was called the Chetopa Short Line. At first and for some years they made a round trip each day from Chetopa and returning, driving four horses. They carried passengers as well as mail. Later when the patronage fell off, a man for a while carried the mail on horseback. Later this route was abandoned. There was considerable travel over the Chetopa-Wayesville Road and I have seen as many as thirty wagons at one time loaded with

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tobacco, apples, peaches and cider, on this road. I earned many a dollar when riding the range by showing the cattlemen who were driving their herds to Baxter Springs, a short cut, crossing the Neosho at the present site of Miami. In this way they did not contact the large droves along the old road. I remember the Poncas; a cattleman named Lellar, a friend of my father's had the contract to supply the government with beef. Mr. Lellar lived in Baxter Springs. We traded at Baxter Springs and also our mail came there.

EARLY MANHOOD

I was small for my age and spent more time on the range than my brothers and so father gradually trusted more to me about the cattle and I grew to think that I knew the business and preferred it to farming. In the spring, I was seventeen, while helping plough, I decided that I liked the cattle business better, so I asked my father to let me start for myself to which he agreed. Deciding that I would like to go to Texas, I wrote to a friend of father's, J. Forsyth of Pierce City, Missouri,

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asking to hire to him for a trip with him to Texas. I received permission and considered myself hired and joined his bunch of men at Vinita. We made the trip to Rockdale, Texas, in freight cars, two in number. The horses filled one and a half of the cars and the balance of the last car, carried ourselves, eighteen tents knocked down, wagons etc. The thing that appealed to me was that we took along in gold the money to pay for the cattle that he expected to purchase. It was in two nailed kegs and was in \$20.00 gold pieces. Each man that went along furnished his horse and saddle. Arrived at Rockdale, J. Forsyth and his brother divided and I accompanied him to about seven miles west of the present city of Denton, Texas, where they were grazing about a thousand cattle. The way that Forsyth looked after me made me wonder if I was one of the regular hands, so one day I asked him if I was and to my disappointment he told me that when I had written him asking for employment, he had received at the same time a letter from my father asking that he take

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me along. He assured me that I was to be a regular and I was and I made the return trip with the cattle purchased but I had thought that I had got a man's job on my own. This experience was to be of great help later on a drive of my own.

THE CATTLE DRIVE

In the spring of 1881 I received a letter from a man of Baxter Springs, named Daugherty asking me to ride over to Baxter Springs on the following Saturday and see him. Undecided about going, father advised me to go and see what he wanted and when I met him he told me that though I did not know him that he knew of me and he was wanting a man to bring a herd through from Fort Worth and he said, "I want you to take charge of this herd. I have had lots of trouble getting through and I think you can bring them through for me." I hesitated and finally told him that I wanted to go into business for myself and wanted to borrow money to finance myself and father said, that I wanted \$10,000.00 and would pay 10% on it. Daugherty said that he had 1000

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head of steers, three to five years old south of Fort Worth and if I would meet him there the following Wednesday that he would let me have the amount I had asked for. So the following Tuesday I boarded the train at Vinita for Fort Worth and on my arrival took charge of the Daugherty herd till his hands arrived from home. During the time before Daugherty's arrival, I had decided to take charge of the herd and bring it to Baxter Springs so I replied when he asked me about my plans that I would take the herd through for him and talk about the money after I reached Baxter Springs.

Laying my plans for the drive, each man was assigned to his place that he kept all the way through. We had eight men and thirty horses. Each man had extra horses. The man assigned as cook was also driver of the wagon that hauled our grub and tents, bedding, etc., and drove two yoke of oxen. I rode ahead each day selecting the route, locating camping places and water and grazing places. Two of my helpers, Andrew Riggs and Mike Patrick, rode point and Johnny Whitworth and Bill Dodson helped. We kept two men on guard at night changing at midnight and I took charge

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while the men breakfasted. After an early breakfast the herd was slowly started the way we intended to go. I tried to find water for them by eleven o'clock and after that they were allowed to rest or graze for two or three hours when they would be started moving again and in this way we averaged twelve miles a day.

From Fort Worth over the Chisholm Trail north and west to the Red River crossing we found few settlements but plenty of grass and water. At the Red River Crossing was my first interruption, for when we reached the river, two inspectors looked over my herd and told me to cut out three steers. I asked why as I had papers for every one. They assured me that this made no difference but just to "cut them out" before I crossed the river. There were several herds near and one of the cattlemen hearing the conversation told me that if my papers were in order just to drive the herd across and the other cattlemen would see that I was not bothered. Having several brands, I had quite a bundle of papers and

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it took some time to go over them all but in the check I accounted for every steer that I had including the three that they had singled out. The next morning, we crossed and no one interfered.

About twenty miles this side of the river, we were caught in a storm, one of the worst that I ever saw; it came upon us without warning and the wind blew so strong that a horse could not stand against it. I turned my horse sideways and threw myself on the ground holding my horse. When the storm passed I began checking my outfit, found the men all safe, the cook wagon on the top of a high bluff but safe and the cattle stampeded. As the storm had been of short duration, the cattle had run only a few miles so we soon had them rounded up again.

The work had settled to routine and day after day we moved slowly northward with plenty of grass and water though never out of sight of some herd, though sometimes we would be obliged to hold our cattle till the water settled from the crossing of a previous herd.

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We met Dick Mutton, near Rush Springs and on his asking how I had made it, he told me that my success had just been good management not luck.

The drive had cost me more than I had expected and by the time that we reached the Kansas Line near the present location of the Chilocco School, I was almost out of money so took a man with me and went across to Arkansas City and to the biggest trader there and told him that I had a thousand steers just south of town and I needed money, telling him who I was and asked that he have sent to my camp thirty dollars worth of provisions and then I said, "I want \$50.00 dollars in money." This trader replied, "Young man, you don't want much, I don't know you and I do not make a practice of delivering groceries at the cow camps." I replied that I would try somewhere else but as I started away he called me back and told me that he would send the supplies out that afternoon. Next, I went across the street to livery stable, wanting to go to the usage agency about sixty miles distant. Being a stranger, the man asked me if I knew anyone there. The trader that had promised me the groceries was just across the street and I

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replied that there is a man that I have met. Calling across the street he asked if he knew me. The trader replied that he did not but that he had just let me have \$30.00 of groceries and \$50.00 in money. Securing the team we drove to the Agency where I found that there was a government regulation but not a law prohibiting any citizen of the United States from driving Texas cattle through the Osage Territory. So I returned to my herd and herded them east towards the Cherokee Nation. Scouting ahead I learned that twenty Osage guards were stationed at a crossing that I intended to make. I went to the home of an Osage near and told them that I was an Indian and a member of the Cherokee Nation and that I was driving a herd to my home; that I could not talk Osage and I wanted him to go with me to the Osage Guards and explain. Finally he consented to go with me to the home of his brother-in-law and ask his advice. When the situation was explained to him, he listened and said "Why, that is all right. He is an Indian and going to his home in his Nation. Let's go along and help him." He was a

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half-breed and spoke English. They went with me back to the herd which all this time had been kept slowly moving toward the crossing. About a half of a mile from the crossing the Osage Guards came riding toward us shouting and waving us back. They began talking and my Osage friends talking to them and when the cattle reached the crossing they moved aside and let the herd cross. I paid the Osages who had befriended me and cut out three beeves for the guards, and so we entered the Cherokee Nation reaching my home on Coal Creek with the herd the middle of July having left Fort Worth the first of May.

When Mr. Daugherty came down to inspect the herd he was surprised at their condition and remarked that they were fat and half were ready to ship now, and made me a proposition saying I will cut out 500 of them and ship them to Kansas City and will let you have the rest at .20.00 per head and you pay me for them when you ship. I had lost only seven head on the trip I kept them and pastured them along Coal Creek and towards what is now

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arcissa, still my luck holding as we had a mild winter, and the following June I sold for \$32.00 per head feeding them through the winter less than a fourth of a ton of hay apiece.

MARRIAGE

I continued to handle cattle and in 1884 married Ramsey Green, a daughter of Paris Green, whose wife was Louisa, a daughter of Andrew Jackson of the same family as Old Hickory.

I founded a home for myself just east of the old home and joining the Miami Fair Grounds on the south and now live on a part of it though my son Claud has for several years lived in the house I first built.

We had five children, Walter, Myrtle, Claud, Roy and Clarence. In the nineties feeling the need of school for them, I bought and built a home in Miami, the present site of the Miami Baptist Hospital where we remained till we sold to the Hospital people/also/who purchased the site of the old George Bigham store the first in Miami.

During this time I have always retained my interest in cattle and still do. With the organizing of the Ottawa

National Bank, I became interested and served as president for many years and am still a director on the board of the First National, the successor of the old Ottawa Bank.

When I sold our home in Miami, we built our present home on the old place south of the fair grounds where my wife and son Roy and myself continue to live.