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Indian Students
Bluff Ferry
Dixon Durant
School Development
A. B. C. F. M.

WOODWARD, ANNIE.

INTERVIEW.

Form A-(S-149)

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

7076.

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Lula Austin.

This report made on (date) August 5, 1937. 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Annie Woodward.

2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 812 North 4th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 20 Year 1881.

5. Place of Birth Savoy, Texas.

6. Name of Father R. R. Halsell Place of birth Kentucky. September 25, 1843

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Annie Gillette Place of birth S. Carolina.

Other information about mother Mother and father died when she was a young girl. She was place in a boarding school until she finished and graduated from the University of South Carolina.

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 19.

Lula Austin,
Interviewer.

An Interview with Mrs. Annie Woodward,
812 North 4th Street, Durant, Oklahoma.

"My father, R. R. Halsell, was president of Savoy College at Savoy, Texas, for twenty-five years. Each year we had ten Indians sent from the Territory. They were paid for by the Government, and at the end of ten months Father would receive \$3900.

We boarded the Indians in our home, and my mother, who was a university graduate, always helped them with their lessons. Other pupils stayed in homes on the grounds that my father erected for them, with everything furnished, including laundry and books. Each evening Father visited each home and helped them with their lessons.

The parents of the Indian children would come in wagons for the commencement exercises. There would be as many as thirty. They would stay a week camping at our home. I would sit with them in the evenings and listen to them tell ghost stories.

Below is a list of Indians who attended school in Savoy, while father was president:

Ella Greenwood
Albert Hamlin
Mary Golsby
Tarry Mead
Bill Connelly

Charlie Hamlin
Dettie Golsby
Gip Brown
Albert Connelly
Charles Green

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Henry Perry

Eli Perry

Mac Kemp

Elbert Turnbull

Fannie Kemp (Mrs. Mead)

Betty Barker

Bud Chico

Jim Cobb

Tom Tabor

San Paul

Wyatt Cheighly (president of

a bank in Pauls
Valley).

Bill Perry

Tom Collin's boy and girl.

Joe Kemp

Minnie Kingsbury

Charley Barker

Bennie Rannels

Mose Cheigley

Jim McLaughlin

Will Kingsbury

Bettie Harper (wife of Gov.
Johnson).

One day I was crossing Red River at Bluff Ferry.

We were about half way across when the cable broke, the river was up, there were several on the ferry on horse-back and I was in a buggy. The horse I was driving was well trained, so I decided to drive off the ferry and take a chance. The horse swam across pulling the buggy up on the bank. People who had crossed before stood on the bank watching, ready to help me if I needed help.

Dixon Durant was my neighbor. A few months before his death, I was sitting in the yard talking to him, and he told me this story:

I thought when the white people came here, they came to take this land away from the Indians, that is why I was enemy to the whites and to give vent to this feeling,

~~I would delight in killing white babies. I would beat~~

their heads and throw their bodies at their mothers. I have killed many in this way, but I am very sorry now. When the white people crossed this country on their way to the California gold rush I would put powder under their wagons and blow them up.

When I first taught in Durant, we always had a wash pan, soap, comb, and towel at the entrance of the school and after recess and lunch, the pupils were required to clean up before entering the classroom.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA.

I. Mission Schools.

1. Schools established by the Foreign Missionary Society.
2. Schools established by American Board.
3. Schools established by Baptists.
4. Schools established by Methodists.
5. Schools established by Moravians and Catholics.

II. Schools Established According to Provisions of Indian Constitutions and Statutes.

III. Schools Established According to Territorial Constitution and Statutes.

IV. Present Day Schools:

1. Common Schools
 - a. Common District Schools.
 - b. Joint District Schools.
 - c. Union Graded Schools.
 - d. Consolidated Schools.
 - e. Independent District Schools.
 - f. County High Schools.
 - g. Separate Schools.

V. Finances.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF OKLAHOMA.

The beginning of the educational history of Oklahoma must be found in the story of the missionaries and the mission stations which, with the exception of a very few, were established after the migration of the Five Civilized Tribes.

In 1820, the United Foreign Missionary Society, composed of the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed Churches, organized the first mission in Oklahoma for the benefit of the Osage Indians. It was located in the valley of the Grand River, in the Southern part of what is now Mayes County and was called Union Mission. Hopefield Mission was established by the same society, in 1823, near the Southeast corner of Craig County. Both of these missions were absorbed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They were abandoned in 1836 when the Osages were removed into Kansas. Reverends Chapman and Vaill and Dr. Palmer were associated with these missions.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was composed of representatives from the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. As early as 1817 Cyrus Kingsbury, a representative of the American Board, was engaged in estab-

lishing Missions among the Indians of Tennessee and Mississippi. Associated with him in this work were Loring S. Williams, Ebenezer Hotchkins, Alfred Wright, and Mr. Cushman. All of these men with the exception of Mr. Cushman came west soon after the tribes migrated.

They established their first mission in Oklahoma, in 1830, at the forks of the Illinois River. Six years later this mission was moved to Park Hill, a few miles south of Tahlequah. It proved to be the most important mission among the Indians. The first printing press in Oklahoma was installed in the Park Hill Mission, and associated with it was a book-binding establishment. It was here that most of the books which were used in the mission schools among the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks, and Seminoles were printed, as were also the books and tracts which were prepared for the Cherokees. Reverend S. A. Worcester was the first superintendent of the Park Hill Mission.

Loring S. Williams and Alfred Wright were the leaders who established the first missions in the Choctaw Nation. The site selected for the first mission was eighteen miles east of Fort Towson. Mr. Wright named the new mission Wheelock in memory of the first president of Dartmouth College. Between 1832, the year in which Wheelock was

established, and 1837, inclusive, no less than ten mission schools were located by the American Board in the Choctaw Nation. Of these ten, only four did not prove to be permanent. Pine Ridge Mission was located south of Fort Towson, in 1835; Greenfield in 1836; Stockbridge, Mountain Fork, and Goodwater in 1837.

From 1836 to 1869 Reverend Kingsbury served as dean of the Choctaw Nation, and for a long while supervised the Pine Ridge School. Reverend Byington had charge of the Stockbridge Mission, east of Broken Bow, while Alfred Wright was located at Wheelock. Byington and Wright devoted much of their time to the translation of the Bible into the Choctaw language. They also compiled a Choctaw dictionary and prepared hymn books to be used in the Choctaw religious services.

The work of the American Board was continued until 1859 at which time the organization was dissolved because of the slavery controversy. The representatives of the Presbyterian Church carried on the work as well as they could, under the direction of Hotchkins, Copeland, and Kingsbury.

The first Baptist Mission in Oklahoma was founded by Reverend Duncan O'Briant, in 1832. Other Baptist Missionaries who were active in Oklahoma were Jesse Bushyhead, John Davis, David Lewis, Buckner, McCoy, Murrow and C. E. Wilson. David

Lewis established a mission called Ebenezer, which was located about fifteen miles west of Fort Gibson and three miles north of the Arkansas River. Other missions were established at Skullyville, Westville, and Providence.

During the earlier years in the Indian Territory the work of the Methodists was done largely by itinerant preachers at certain stated places rather than by a concentration of effort in a particular locality. Their efforts were very successful however, and resulted in the conversion of hundreds of Indians, among whom were John Ross and Greenwood LeFlore. The most important Methodist Missionaries were Alexander Talley, Moses Perry, John Fletcher Boot, and John Harrell. Schools which they established were Spencer Academy, Fort Coffee Academy, New Hope, Asbury, Manual Labor School Bloomfield Academy and Colbert Institute.

The Moravian Church was probably the first protestant church that did missionary work in Oklahoma. It is said that the first church bell ever brought to Oklahoma was one that hung in the belfry of the church at the Moravian Mission for the Cherokees.

The Catholics also did some work among the Indians of Oklahoma, but most of their work was done among the Osages in Kansas.

As early as January 1818, the House Committee on Indian Affairs reported in favor of "establishing schools at convenient and safe place among these tribes friendly to us". On March 3, 1819, the first general appropriation for Indians' education was made by Congress, "the annual sum of \$10,000". In almost all of the treaties made with the various tribes and nations, the Government made some provision for the education of their children, or indicated measures looking thereto.

The first secular schools to be established in Oklahoma were the neighborhood schools which were financed by the Indians. They were located where the greatest number of children could conveniently attend them.

The constitutions and statutes of each of the Five Tribes made provisions for tribal schools. These schools were often let out under contract to persons who agreed to conduct them as stipulated.

The Choctaw laws of 1862 contain some interesting facts about the Choctaw educational institution and their system of management.

Special appropriations were made for the support of Spencer Academy near Doaksville, the Male and Female Seminaries at Fort Coffee, the Female Seminary at Wheelock and several other institutions. The appropriations were to be paid to the superintendents and teachers were furnished home and board, and in addition were to receive no more than \$400.00 per year. Instruction in mechanical art and agriculture was combined with literary instructions in the male schools; while in the female schools special attention was given to sewing, cooking, and housekeeping. For each of the neighborhood schools and for each academy a Light-horseman was provided as a truant officer to enforce the compulsory school law. After a fair trial of two years if a pupil proved to be mentally incapable he was removed from school and his place filled by a more capable one. Only one pupil from each family was permitted to attend school at a time, unless the parent paid expenses of all except one. No stores could be established within three miles of any public school. The rules and regulations of each public school had to be approved by the General Council of the Choctaw Nation.

The Cherokee Nation, in 1848, began the constructions of the buildings for two institutions of higher learning.

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They were called the National Male Seminary and the National Female Seminary and were located near Tahlequah. The buildings were finished and opened for the reception of pupils in 1851, they were closed because of lack of funds and were not re-opened until after the Civil War. The buildings of these schools had been a pet scheme of John Ross, and after they were closed the empty buildings were referred to as "Ross's Folly". Open for only a short time they exerted a great influence in the Cherokee Nation. They were free from the atmosphere of dependence which hung over the mission schools, even tho' the latter were often built and largely supported at tribal expense. The result of the influence of these two schools was the more perfect development of independent men and women which added much to the happiness and well-being of the Cherokee people.

The educational system which existed before 1860, among all of the five nations, was practically swept away during the Civil War. When the new treaties were made one of the first things to which the Indians turned their attention was the rebuilding of their schools.

At that time the Choctaws had three tribal schools, one hundred and forty-six public schools, and four high schools,

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The Cherokees had three tribal schools, one hundred public schools, and seven mission schools. The Creeks had five tribal schools, twenty-two Indian public schools, six colored public schools, and six public schools; and the Seminoles had four public schools and two mission schools. The policy adopted by the Federal Government was to encourage the tribal schools of the Indians more advanced in civilization, and to provide Government schools where the Indians were uncivilized. This system was continued practically unchanged until the passage of the Curtis Act of June 28, 1898.

Oklahoma was opened to white settlement in 1889, but the organization of the public schools system was not possible until after the passage of the Organic Act and the installation of a territorial government. In the meantime, subscription schools were maintained in the towns and cities. The Organic Act provided for a system of public schools and appropriated the sum of \$50,000 for the support of the same until necessary revenue could be raised by local taxation. Section sixteen and thirty-six of each township were reserved for the benefit of the public schools.

When the territorial government was installed the organization of the public school system was undertaken under

provisions made by the statutes of Nebraska. Professor J. H. Lawhead of Kingfisher County was appointed as territorial superintendent of public instruction, and county superintendents were appointed for each of the seven counties.

In June 1890, at the suggestion of Governor Steele, an educational meeting was held at Edmond. A committee of teachers was selected to undertake the work of drafting a code of school laws for submission to the Legislative Assembly. Three weeks were spent in formulating this code, which served as a basis for the public school legislation during the first session of the Legislative Assembly. The members of this committee served without compensation other than their expenses while serving. These expenses were met by a fund that was raised by popular subscription among the citizens of Oklahoma City.

The first Territorial Legislative Assembly enacted the necessary laws for the establishment of the University at Norman, the Agricultural and Mechanical School at Stillwater, and the Normal School at Edmond. All three of these institutions were organized during the following year. A few years later normal schools were established at Alva and Weatherford and a University Preparatory School was founded at Tonkawa.

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After the homestead land of Oklahoma had been taken up, the question came as to the sale of the school lands. It was found that the lands could not be sold until Oklahoma became a state. At this time they were occupied by squatters who were paying no rent. The Fifty-Third Congress passed an act which authorized the territory to lease the school land under proper regulations. This course was continued until statehood. The lease money was divided among the counties pro rata according to the school population. District schools were established in nearly every community within a year after the settlement of the first lease money. The funds were so scarce that humble schools were often built by community effort. In the eastern counties they were built of logs, while in the prairie regions they were made of sod or turf.

In the Indian Territory rapid strides were also being made. The Curtis Act, passed in 1898, provided for a Federal system of school administration among the Five Civilized Tribes. Tribal funds were supplemented by Federal appropriations which made it possible to furnish schools to the non-citizen white people, mostly tenant farmers. The common schools of the Five Tribes were brought under a uniform system for the first time. These schools

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were remodeled and improved. The standard of requirements for teachers was raised, and normal institutes were held each year. The first school district organization in Indian Territory was effected at Wagoner in 1896.

The Enabling Act, which also set apart sections sixteen and thirty-six in each township for the support of the schools, provided an appropriation of five million dollars to be used as a permanent school fund, since there were no unoccupied lands which might be set apart in the Indian Territory.

Prior to this time Muskogee had become an educational center with Bacone University, Harrell International Institutions, and Henry Kendall College as its most important institutions. Willie Halsell College was located at Vinita, Hargrove College at Ardmore, and the Presbyterian College for young women had been founded at Durant.

The Enabling Act also set apart section thirteen in each township to be used "for the use and benefit of the institutions of higher learning in the State". Soon after Oklahoma became a state, the University was reorganized, and there was established a school of Mines at Wilburton, a college for girls at Chickasha, three Normal Schools at

Ada, Durant, and Tahlequah, and six district Agricultural Schools at Lawton, Tishomingo, Warner, Broken arrow, Helena, and Goodwell.

So has the school system in Oklahoma evolved from the humble mission school to the complex system of the present time. In the joint district schools, the union graded schools, the consolidated schools, the independent district schools, the county high school and separate schools. The common school needs no explanation.

The joint district school is located in a district which has been formed from territory lying within two or more counties. Each joint district school is "under the jurisdiction and control of the superintendent of instruction of that county represented in such district having the largest amount of territory embraced within the boundaries of such joint district."

The union graded school is found in a district which has been formed of two or more adjacent districts. In this district is the central school in which instruction is given to all pupils above the sixth grade, to and including the regular high school work and such work is not duplicated in other schools of the union graded school district.

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The consolidated school district is formed by the union of two or more adjacent districts having a total valuation equal to, or exceeding five hundred thousand dollars. The one or two room school buildings are abandoned and a modern well-equipped building is erected near the center of the consolidated district.

The independent school is that school which maintains four years of high school work fully accredited with the State University, provided that said school is located within an incorporated town or a city of the first class.

The county high school may be established in each county having a population of less than two thousand persons of school age.

Provision was made for the separate school so that "the public schools of the State of Oklahoma should be organized and maintained upon a complete plan of separation between the white and colored races, with impartial facilities for both races". The county separate school of the race having the fewest number of children in said district.

In the group containing our institutions of higher learning we have our State University in Norman; our six teachers colleges in Tahlequah, Ada, Durant, Edmond, Alva, and Weatherford; the Panhandle Agricultural and Mechanical

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College in Goodwell; the Oklahoma College for Women in Chickasha; the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Stillwater; the Conner Agricultural School in Jarner; the Murray State School of Agriculture in Hixson; the Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston; the Oklahoma School of Mines in Wilburton; the Oklahoma Military Academy in Claremore; and the University Preparatory School in Tulsa.

The problem of financing this complex system of schools is one of great magnitude, and one which has not yet been satisfactorily solved.

Three existing conditions make the proper financing of the common schools impossible: (1) the fact that the school district is the unit of local control; (2) that there is a vast amount of land in Oklahoma which is non-taxable; (3) school enumeration and not school attendance is the basis for apportionment.

The district system is not democratic since it lacks the main essence of democracy, equality of opportunity. The district taxes have a maximum rate of fifteen mills, with an additional ten mill levy for building purposes, but no minimum rate, hence the great inequality of schools throughout the districts of the state. In some districts

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there is a very small school enumeration and the taxes in these districts are hardly appreciable. The burden of support lies heavily on the districts having a large school enumeration since the local community pays about eighty per-cent of the total cost of the schools. Eighty percent of all the high school teachers in the state are employed in independent districts where only forty-one percent of the school enumeration occurs. Every child within the independent districts are within easy access of the schools while in some districts in the state there are children who are twenty-five miles from a high school.

The total permissible state levy is thirty-one and one-half mills on an ad valorem basis. There is a county tax of two mills for county high schools and aid to common schools, not over one mill to be used for high school purposes. In addition to this tax is the gross production tax, the five percent proceeds from sales of public lands, the interest from the permanent school funds, and small Federal appropriations.

There are approximately 6,700,000 acres of land in Oklahoma owned by the Indians, hence non-taxable. A ten mill tax on these lands would produce an annual revenue of

\$12,228,000.00

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The method of apportionment places no premium on school attendance. The district in which there is a high percent of attendance receives the same sum of money for the maintenance of its schools as another district which has the same school enumeration, but a very poor percent of attendance. As long as these three conditions are allowed to exist we shall continue to hear that schools all over the state are closing long before the regular term is over, as was the case with many of our schools this last school year.

We have already mentioned the provisions made by the Organic and the Enabling Acts for the support of the institutions of higher learning. In addition to these provisions there are special Federal allotments to be used in the vocational schools, special benevolent funds for the negro colleges, and appropriations which are made from time to time by the State Legislature.