

INDEX CARDS:

Cherokee Nation
Tribe-Cherokee
Redland
Tom Starr

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

160

Field Worker's name Jas. S. BuchananThis report made on (date) May 18th 19371. Name Coodey, Daniel Ross Y2. Post Office Address Porum, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 17 Year 18775. Place of birth Redland, Cherokee Nation.6. Name of Father Lewis Ross Coodey Place of birth Cherokee NationOther information about father Fullblood Cherokee7. Name of Mother Betty (Collier) Coodey Place of birth MississippiOther information about mother White

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 Nine.

May 18th, 1937

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS, Informant.
Porum, Oklahoma.

-Jas. S. Buchanan

I was born November 17, 1877, near the town of Redland, Cherokee Nation.

My father was Lewis Ross Coodey, a fullblood Cherokee, born January 1, 1849, at the old Coodey home place at Frozen Rock, about four miles east and two miles south of Muskogee.

My mother was Betty (Collier) Coodey, (white) born in Mississippi.

My parents were married in Sequoyah District, but I do not remember the date.

My mother died in 1882 when I was only five years of age and I have no recollection of her.

I grew to manhood in this district and what schooling I received was in the Cherokee public schools.

September 24, 1898 I was married to Ella Hodgens (white) of near old Briartown, and to us five sons have been born as follows:

(2)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

Daniel H., July 24, 1901.

Andrew M., February 26, 1903.

Sequoyah, October 8, 1905.

Dewitt, February 25, 1907.

Charles O'Keefe, December 10, 1908.

I remember when I was a small boy the town of Redland was ^a trading center and a shipping point for that district as it was an important steamboat landing, as there were several boats operating on the Arkansas river at that time. Redland was also a stage stop on the old stage line which operated between Ft. Smith and Ft. Gibson. Other stations on the stage line were Muldrow, Salsaw and Campbell, the latter being changed to Illinois after the Missouri Pacific railroad was built in 1888, and again changed to Gore in later years.

Briartown, which was located about one half mile north of the present town site, was one of the oldest towns in this part of the country.

(3)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

TOM STARR

Tom Starr was a fullblood Cherokee and owned about ten slaves when he came to the Territory before the Civil War. He cleared several acres of land of cane and timber and improved a large claim on the Canadian river, afterwards known as the Tom Starr place. He established and operated the first ferry boat on the Canadian river in that vicinity, which was located about one mile west of the highway bridge south of the present site of Briartown.

A story of Tom Starr's cool headedness and daring is in connection with a white gambler that came into the Territory from Arkansas with a horse in which the fellow had much confidence as a race horse, and as Tom Starr had a horse of which he had the same opinion, naturally, Tom and the gambler matched a horse race. The bet between Tom and the white fellow on the race was \$500, and of course there was other betting on the side. Just prior

(4)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

to the race, the gambler seeing that Tom was not wearing a gun, made the assertion, "I don't give a damn which horse wins the race, I will take the money". Tom told him, "If your horse wins, the money will be yours, but if my horse wins, the money will be mine". The race was run and Tom's horse won the race by about sixty feet, and true to his boast, the gambler started to draw his gun, but Tom Starr snatched a bowie knife from his belt and threw it at the fellow, standing several feet away, killing him instantly. He threw it with such force that the point of the blade passed through the man's body and stuck in the ground when the man fell. Tom got his money that he justly won on the race, but the Federal officers put Tom on the scout for this killing. He could be heard of at different places but could never be captured for the other Indians knew that Tom was justified in killing the gambler, not for the money, but to save his own life, therefore they shielded and protected him from the law. Finally the charges were dismissed and Tom and my grand-

(5)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

father, who was an officer and in pursuit of Tom, made peace and were the best of friends and went on hunts together afterwards.

TREATIES.

I served on the first representative committee that instituted the claims of the Cherokees against the United States government. Other members of the committee were Levi Gritts, John R. Smith, John McDaniel and Frank J. Boudinot who is now representing the Cherokees and prosecuting their claims in Washington, D.C.

From the beginning of American history the white man has never been satisfied with his property possessions and has always persecuted and deprived the Indian of possessions that rightfully belonged to the Redman. Treaty after treaty was made with the Indians only to be broken after a certain length of time when the white man became dissatis-

(6)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

fied with the possessions such treaties had given him, and through greed of the white man, regardless of previous treaties, another treaty would be forced upon the Indian, always depriving him of more and more of his rightful possessions. White man sees anything he wants, he takes it. Indian wants only what belongs to him and to be left alone, but he will never be permitted to live in peace as long as he has anything the white man wants.

Though every treaty, including the Hopewell treaty of 1785 to the 18th treaty of 1866 were repudiated and treated as a scrap of paper, the greatest outrage of all time was committed by Congress in 1893 when it passed the Act authorizing the Dawes commission. The Great Spirit, in His divine wisdom was never responsible for any such scourge being sent upon any people as the curse of the Dawes commission was upon the Indian, and as long as the Indian has a memory, the thought of it will linger as a monument to the fallacy of the white man.

(7)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

When the Fourteenth Treaty was made in Washington, D. C. in 1828 it defined the boundry line between Arkansas and the Indian reservations on the west and solemnly pledged to the Cherokees 7,000,000 acres of land in the new reservation adjoining Arkansas.

This treaty reads in part; "The United States anxiously desires to secure to the Cherokees a permanent home which shall, under the solemn guarantee of the United States, be and remain theirs forever, as long as grass grows and water flows, a home that shall never, in all future time, be embarrassed by having extended around it the lines, or placed over it the jurisdiction of a territory or state, nor be pressed upon by the extension, in any way, of any of the limits of any existing territory or state."

The Cherokees accepted that treaty as it read in its simplicity in good faith and as a faithful pledge on the part of the United States government, but I ask, what was it worth in the eyes of the Dawes commission? Only a scrap of paper.

(8)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

After the war with England, George Washington, then president of the United States, gave to the Cherokees a land grant of 500,000 acres of land in Tennessee in recognition of the service of the Cherokees in the war with England. When the removal of the Cherokees was made from that country to the west, they were deprived of that land, and to this day they have never been compensated for that grant, the same as several other just, but unpaid claims the Cherokees have against the United States government which are pending in the court of claims in Washington now being prosecuted by Frank J. Boudinot.

The Indian has been continually driven west to a trackless country, until there is no other place to drive him, but the white man has persistently followed along to skin him. The end of the trail.

When the Indian government was in force and the Indian was at liberty to live according to their customs and mode of living, they had plenty and wanted for nothing. They protected the wild game

(9)

COODEY, DANIEL ROSS

by only killing what they actually needed. They were cautious not to cause forest fires that would destroy the wild fruit which was plentiful in this country in the early days, such as wild plums, strawberries, raspberries and blackberries. When the white people settled up the country they soon destroyed all the wild fruit by forest fires, slaughtered the game and polluted the streams and destroyed the fish.

After all these natural resources of the Indian was destroyed, the white man's government passed laws to protect them after it was too late. He passed a law that compels the Indian to pay \$1.25 for license to fish in his own streams and what few self-respecting fish there were yet in the country heard of it, and in disgust, left for other parts, and all we have to show for it all is high taxes to create state funds for the dishonest politicians to steal.