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Creek Nation
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Creek Council House

Interview with
Anna Belle Cunard

Jerome M. Emmons,
Field worker.
5-21-37

I was born northwest of Okmulgee in 1872. Our home was close to what is now Checote Park in the outskirts of Okmulgee. There is family burial ground nearby. My father was Samuel Checote, at one time a Principal Chief of the Creek Nation and my mother's maiden name was Cunard. My father was married a second time.

EARLY OKMULGEE

I remember a hotel which was behind the F. B. Severs store, which was located at the present site of the Citizens National Bank, managed by a man named Smith. There was a good well in front of the C. W. Turner store. This store was located south of the Okmulgee Building at which site was a blacksmith shop. I think Capt. Belcher was the Postmaster at one time and the Postoffice was north of the Council House. When G. W. Fryer and L. M. McDermott erected the Creek Council House old Indians claim that medicine was put in the corner to prevent cyclones in this vicinity.

SCHOOLS

I went to school in the Council House. A Mrs. Robinson was my teacher. One of her three daughters taught at Nuyaka and Alice was later a national congresswoman.

COUNCILS

The Councilmen, the House of Kings and the House of Warriors, met in October and held meetings for the entire month. The pay was \$4- per day. Rev. Martin Checote, my father's uncle, was chaplain for these meetings. A courthouse stood over on Salt Creek between Tuskegee and Beggs.

BURIAL GROUNDS.

My father, mother, two infant daughters, Minnie and Melissa; son Bengie, who was 2 years old at death; Martha Checote Gibson and Joe Hardridge, her son by a former marriage, are all buried at the family burial grounds.

I know of the burial grounds out near the 'Frisco tracks and the one east of Newtown. When my father was no longer Chief, he often went to Washington as a delegate. After he had

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returned from there in the fall of 1884, I helped to nurse him until he died in the latter part of that year.

COMMENTS.

The Indian woman who married Capt. Belcher was named Taumesah. She raised Mary Grayson who lives here in town.

In 1931 the last fish killing took place. Some of the old Creeks put medicine into a river or lake which kills the fish and brings rain soon afterward.

I am related to the present Chief of the Creeks, Wiley Gunard of Wetumka, Okla., by marriage.

Mrs. Anna Belle Gunard is at present living with her daughter, Mrs. Agnes Kelly, at 216 W. 4th St., in Okmulgee.