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Wm. T. Holland,  
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Interview with Mrs. Susanna Adair Davis,  
106 S. Quannah. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

My first husband was William Penn Adair, known as a full-blood Cherokee Indian. He was born in the Indian Territory, Cherokee Nation, in Flint Dist. near Stilwell, Oklahoma on November 13, 1857.

His father was Red Squirrel Adair and his mother was Sallie Sunday Adair. They were born in the "old" country, Georgia, and came west before general transfer of the Indians. I have heard them tell of their journey. Red Squirrel Adair met his future wife, also a Full-blood, on this trip. They were allowed to bring their herds so Grandpa Red Squirrel walked the entire distance and drove his father's sheep. That was about 1810 and he was 16 years of age at that time. They would camp together and in this way Red Squirrel and Sallie Sunday met. They had similar jobs. Sallie however, got to ride a pony but her job was to drive the sheep and cattle. At night time the herds would often get mixed and this, of course, resulted in confusion and arguments, many of these between Red Squirrel Adair, 16 years of age and Sallie Sunday, 11 years of age. However, this did not keep them from being friends. Their families settled in the Cherokee Nation, Red Squirrel's near Stilwell, Oklahoma and the Sundays further north and east of them.

However, the families visited each other from time to time and as the children grew older, it seems their friendship developed into love and they were married, but I don't remember the date. Red Squirrel had three brothers, two, Foreman and Beaver, were killed by the "Night Hawks", a band operating in that day.

Well, getting back to my husband, William Penn Adair, will say that he lead a quiet and ordinary life in his early years. Went to school near home when any was afforded and later when he was about 18 years of age, he went to school at the Male Seminary, located at Tahlequah. He seemed to be apt at learning and among other talents he developed into a fine and fast penman. This proved to be of much benefit to him later on. For a time he worked on his father's farm and too, took up the trade as a rock mason. He and his brother built quite a lot of rock chimneys in that community. Along about 1884 he was elected Court Cleark for Flint District at Tahlequah and served one term. Here his penmanship came in handy as he often took down the testimony of witnesses in long hand, so fast he was. Well, he was in politics now and seemed to like it. He served as councilman in the Cherokee Nation for several years, was a councilman when we married, which was 50 years ago, or in 1887.

His term expired as councilman in the fall of 1887 but he wasn't content it seemed, out of office and politics so he sought and received appointment as U. S. Deputy Marshal working out of Fort Smith and under Judge Parker. Along during this period, politics were plenty hot. They didn't have the Democrat and Republicans as now exist, but had what was known as the Nationalists (now Democrats) and the Downings who was a very popular Chief of the Cherokees, in fact, succeeded John Ross cordingly. My husband was a member or aligned himself with, the Downings. Politics were not all that divided the parties, it got down to personal differences which were sometimes settled in a very horrible manner, murder.

The Nationalist party organized what was known as the "Night Hawks", a band of outlaws who traveled at night and killing whom it suited them. It was said that at their meetings names would be selected and these, of course, were the most active in the other party, but personal matters would also determine who was to be executed. Then they would boldly ride to their homes, or ambush them, and often kill their so called enemy. I might add that the Downing party was loyal to the Union during the Civil War so this reason was partly the cause of the friction between them in later years.

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Well, my husband served a deputy marshal under Judge Parker, doing the things required of a deputy, until 1894 when he was killed. Of course, at this time the Cherokee Nation had its own laws which were administered by them and which compared or probably was patterned from the U. S. Government as they had their Chief who presided, or was Chief Executive, and the legislature which was known as Council, the members being elected by the voters and their courts, civil and criminal. All matters concerning them was handled by them, but all matters concerning whites were settled in Judge Parker's court at Fort Smith, which had jurisdiction over this territory. My husband had to travel a lot, gone a good deal of the time as all travel was horseback. His death was due to an arrest he made. One, Willie Rat, by name, had committed some minor offence and my husband instead of hunting him up, just sent word by some one that he had a warrant for him and for him to appear in Judge Parker's court on a certain day, so he got the word and sure enough he was there the day set for trial. Well, he pleaded guilty, I don't remember the charge, and was sentenced for a year and a day at prison in Detroit. This prison, a Federal one, was used for war prisoners during the Civil War and according to inmates, was almost a school.

The prisoners were treated well, fed good and taught a trade, and usually came out better fitted for life than when they entered, except in one thing. It seems that you can let an Indian have whiskey to excess or confine him for a period and he is sure to develop the T. B. Well, Willie Rat, while there only 9 months, developed T. B. and didn't last very long. William McLemore, an uncle of Willie Rat, an apparent friend of my husband, that is, was a friend when in his presence, especially when my husband was armed, was also a member of Nationalist Faction and a "Night Hawk". He developed a secret hatred for my husband because of the arrest of his nephew and even accused him of being the cause of his death Thru T. B. Well, that was far fetched but enough for McLemore, for he didn't like my husband politically and it seems too just because he was popular and was getting along.

I warned my husband of the danger but he was fearless and said McLemore didn't have the courage to do anything, even thou he wanted to. Well, McLemore abided his time and one day met my husband when he was unarmed and shot him in the back, killing him instantly, in 1894. McLemore was arrested and in due time brought to trial before Judge Parker. I, of course,

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attended the trial. Mrs. McLemore and I were the best of friends and visited each other often and this made matters even worse. The trial was had and resulted in a mistrial, Judge Parker deciding he didn't have jurisdiction in the case, as both were full-blood Cherokee Indians. So, McLemore was transferred to the Jail at Tahlequah where he was to await trial, but before the date of the trial the Cherokee Council was abolished, all prisoners set free and for two years the only law recognized was the law of the gun. It seems that this two year period was a transition before the Federal forces organized to control things. Anyhow, McLemore went free. My recollection is that this period was along about 1896 to 1898.

My husband also helped to take the census of the Cherokee Nation and acted as interpreter when the census was taken, prior to the payment to the Indians of money received from the sale of their land.

The late Will Rogers was named for my husband, William Penn Adair.