

INDEX CARDS

Removal--Cherokee;  
Civil War--Cherokee Nation  
Border towns--Fort Smith, Arkansas  
Fort Smith, Arkansas  
Farming--Cherokee Nation  
Sallisaw  
Hotels--Cherokee Nation  
Stage routes  
Gann  
Schools--Cherokee Nation  
Food--Cherokee  
Basketry--Cherokee

Field Worker; Grace Kelley  
May 14, 1937.

Interview with Rachel Dodge,  
11 miles SE of Henryetta

Born 1886

Parents Christopher Columbus Clay, Father,  
Born in the I. T. Cherokee Nation.  
Polly Silk, mother,  
Born, I. T., Cherokee Nation.

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TRAIL OF TEARS, by Rachel Dodge.

Aggie Silk was my grandmother and she has told me of the many hardships of the trip to this country. Many had chills and fever from the exposure, change of country and they didn't have too much to eat. When they would get too sick to walk or ride, they were put in the wagons and taken along until they died. The Indian Doctors couldn't find the herbs they were used to and didn't know the ones they did find, so they couldn't doctor them as they would have at home. Some rode in wagons, some rode horses and some had to walk. There was a large bunch when she came; she was sixteen years old. They were Cherokees and stopped close to Muldrow where they built log houses or cabins but they didn't like this country at first as everything was so strange. She married at twenty years of age.

### Civil War.

When the Civil War started, she had had four children but only a boy and a girl were living. Her husband went to fight on the Confederate side and was killed before it was over. Her folk stayed around there and didn't leave their homes to go south. He would come home some nights and bring some game he had gotten on the way.

The Northern soldiers came through there and killed her two cows and chickens and broke all her dishes and pots. She hid her feather bed in a cliff so it wasn't bothered. A shovel was also saved and she would cook bread and meat on this shovel, using it like a griddle. All the meat she had was wild game but there was plenty of that.

### Indian Trading.

They went to Fort Smith for supplies; several families would go in ox wagons and get all the things they needed. For money they traded hides or deer hams. They didn't farm enough for them to sell anything they raised. The plows were all of wood including the plow-blade and the only other tool of that sort was a shovel.

They raised corn and a few vegetables to eat. It took two or three days to go to Fort Smith with oxen.

(Indian Clothing)

Grandma spun and wove the material she needed for clothes and bed covers. I can remember her spinning wheel real well.

She lived to be ninety-seven years old and remained in good health, except she had fallen about twenty years before and paralyzed her right arm. She had plenty of hogs and cattle and people thought she kept a lot of money at the place but her brother had all that she had with him. One day she went to the well after water and somebody shot her with buckshot and she wasn't found for about two days. She was living north of Aikens four or five miles at that time.

First Settlers of Ballisaw.

Grandmother's sister and her husband, Nancy and John Childers, were the first settlers of Ballisaw. They started the Childers Hotel and ran it as long as they were able. When they got too old to get about, they sold it. The Stage Coach came through there and stopped, changing horses. The driver ate at the hotel

and others ate and stayed there. Her cow lot was on the Main Street and the pump is still there but it is on a sidewalk now.

#### Naming of Gann.

The railroad branched there, M. K. & T., and New Sallisaw started and that railroad went on to Redland. Mother lived west but there wasn't a town there then.

Mrs. Dodge's aunt got some big lard cans and had her send milk to the hotel every day on the train. My step-father and I would go down to the track and use a handkerchief or something to flag the train down to get the milk. One day the conductor asked father who owned the land around there. Father said, "I do." He said that wasn't what he meant, he wanted to know his name. Father said it was Tom Gann and he said, "Well, after this, we will call this place Gann." The railroad had a platform like a dancing platform built and anyone who wanted to go on the train would get on the platform, the milk or anything else was placed on it. The train would stop if anything was on it but not otherwise. Then a man named

Harris put up a store and sold a little of everything but it was a small store. Later a postoffice was in the back of this store.

#### My first schooling.

My first schooling was at Hanson, seven or eight miles northwest of Gann. There was an empty house about a half mile from a farmer's house. It had a good fireplace and they were important. His wife, Mrs. Lee, decided to teach school there. We paid a dollar each for every month that we went. There were three benches which we placed around the fireplace on cold days; when it was warm we moved them back. Not many attended school for not many could pay that price for the children to go. I think there were six or eight pupils.

Mother died and my own father came and got me and I went to Twin Groves; that was free to the Indians and the books were furnished. The Blue Back Speller and McGuffey's Reader were furnished. (My step-mother has a Rays Arithmetic and Blue Back Speller now and they are both in good condition). The school was four miles away and we would start real early and just take our time in getting there. We couldn't go in bad weather so we didn't get much schooling.

Blue Dumplings.

Fill a tub with blackeyed pea hulls and burn them, then cover the ashes with water. The ashes will settle to the bottom and the water will be clear but dark. Take the cornmeal and salt it and add some of the hot blue water to make a stiff dough. Pat it in the shape of small biscuits and put them into the rest of boiling blue water. Cook them until they are done and they will have a blue color.

Della Barnett, Henryetta, R. #2, has a mortar and pestle. She is a colored woman.

Riddle.

Take cane and cut it in long strips, weave a basket with square holes in the bottom but close sides. Use it like a sieve, that is put the corn, that has been beaten in the mortar with the pestle, in the riddle and shake it over a pan. The grits will stay in the riddle and the flour will fall in the pan. Another way to separate them is to use the fanning pan.

Fanning Pan.

The fanning pan is made exactly like the riddle, except it is closely woven to keep the flour in. It

takes skill to use the fanning pan correctly. They shake the pan to get the flour in the bottom of the pan with the grits on top, then they give it a little jerk and the grits jump over the edge of the fanning pan into another that is setting on the table. I have seen them do it just as regular as clockwork but I can't do it. I can shake it together then I have to take my hand and gather it up and out by hand.

#### Draw Bridge at Fort Smith.

Before mother died we were going to Fort Smith the first time after the Draw bridge was built. When we came in sight of it, it was divided to let a steamship pass and father said that he thought it wasn't done and we couldn't cross. We saw the steamship but didn't connect the two at all. Pretty soon it passed and the bridge started together. After it was together, he was afraid to cross it for fear that it would part and let us in the river. He did cross it but we were all glad when we were on the other side.