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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for OklahomaField Worker's name John C. KerrReport made on (date) June 111937Name Samuel A. DunhamPost Office Address Perry, OklahomaResidence address (or location) 615 HolleyDATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 4 Year 1874Place of birth Menden, Missouri.Name of Father Peyton Randolph Dunham Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Almarinda Davis Place of birth West Virginia

Other information about mother _____

es or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and
ory of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects
questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to
s form. Number of sheets attached _____.

PIONEER LIFE

Related by Samuel A. Dunham
John C. Kerr, Field Worker

On September 16, 1893, Peyton Randolph Dunham made the race into the Cherokee Strip and located on a farm twelve miles north of Perry, Oklahoma. With him was his son, Samuel A. Dunham; who was not old enough to get a homestead, being at this time only nineteen years old. The farm Mr. Dunham secured was on Red Rock Creek, on which was quite a lot of timber. Samuel helped his father cut logs of Elm, Cottonwood and Hackberry, which they hauled up Red Rock Creek eight miles to a saw mill. They used three yoke of oxen for hauling. Their house and a shed barn were constructed out of this native lumber. The house is still standing on this place.

While they were doing this improving, they lived on the creek bank under several large Oak trees in a tent. The sides of the tent were boarded up to the eaves, with what was called slabs, this being the first of outside cut off of the logs and had the bark on. This was their home for ever a year.

This place they secured in the run was two miles from the Otoe Indian Reservation, seven miles from the

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Indian trading post, and fourteen miles from the Indian Agency. There were no roads to these different places, just trails leading across the country. All the creeks had to be forded, except right at the Indian Agency where there was a toll bridge built by the Government. This bridge was run by Gus Ladue, a Frenchman, and his squaw, a full-blood Otoo Indian.

Mr. Ladue was of short stature and weighed around 350 pounds. They had to make a special casket for him when he died.

At this time the Indians lived in camps, although the Government had built them some houses on their different allotments. The Indian Agent would order them to live in their houses and they would go to their allotments, stay one or two nights mostly out side in their tepees, and then they would all gather together again and establish another camp.

At this time the Government would issue them cattle for beef and the Indians would chase these cattle like they used to the buffalo, shoot them and butcher them where they fell. They would take the beef to their camps and have a feast, the whole camp cooking and eating like one big family.

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These feasts would generally occur on some holiday, such as Christmas, July 4th, or when some Indians from another tribe would visit them. Gifts of ponies and other things were exchanged at such visiting time. Always on the death of an Indian there was also a feast.

Then horse races were run to see who would get the dead Indian's best pony. Mr. Dunham states he has attended these celebrations on several occasions and has taken part in their various sports.

At this time the town of Red Rock consisted of two box cars, used as a freight room and depot. The trading post was a large frame building. It, as well as the livery stable and lumber yard, was owned by one man, A Mr. Phillip Witherspoon, who had a Government Permit. Mr. Witherspoon also had a lease on the entire Otoe Indian Reservation, where he grazed hundreds of cattle. This was quite a hang-out for lots of cowboys. As a rule they were all very nice fellows.

The Indians were paid their allotments at the Otoe Agency, seven miles east of Red Rock town. They were paid quarterly and these payments sometimes were as much as sixty thousand dollars, which was spent for wagons, harness,

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blankets, and supplies; also in gambling and horse racing. Old Charley White Horse was chief of the Otoe tribe at this time.

For amusement, they had picnics, dances and box suppers.

The country continued to improve and after the first two years, crops were better. There was an old trail, starting at Red Rock leading to Pawnee, over which all supplies were hauled, there being no railroad at Pawnee. The hauling was done by wagon over this trail and the trail led diagonally across the country. Another trail leading from Arkansas City, Kansas, to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, came through Red Rock, crossing the Salt Fork River at the 101 Ranch, and crossing the toll bridge at Red Rock, passing on down through the Otoe Indian reservation, south and west. This trail was used for freighting and was travelled by hundreds of covered wagons, coming to and leaving all parts of Oklahoma. Camp yards and livery stables were very numerous, as were horse traders and fortune hunters.

On March 17, 1900, there occurred one of the outstanding robberies of those days. At the Red Rock trading post, two men came in, one dressed as a woman, having on an old mother hubbard dress and a sunbonnet. The robbers' names

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were : Ben Cravens and Bert Welty. They lined up thirteen men, most of them employes of the Post; Cravens standing guard while Welty was gathering the money. At this time Mr. Alvin Bateman who was postmaster and bookkeeper came in and he thought a joke was being played, and so he didn't line up. When he saw it was a real hold-up he pulled his gun, shot Welty hitting him in the thumb, the bullet ranging up his arm and lodging in his shoulder. Welty shot Bateman twice through the breast and Cravens shot him three times also, killing him on the spot. Cravens and Welty got away with about \$700.00, overlooking \$1300. in the safe. They went south and east through the Otoy country. They were surrounded in a farm house close to Lela, Oklahoma, in Pawnee County. Welty was captured. Cravens shot his way out and escaped. Welty was brought to Perry, Oklahoma, where mob law was cheated by the quick thinking of George Foster, sheriff. There was a mob gathered of about a thousand men from all over the north part of Noble County but Sheriff Foster slipped Welty from the jail, took him down to the south edge of Perry, where there was a Santa Fe coal chute, and caught the train there, taking him to the Federal jail in Guthrie. Welty

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was convicted, sentenced to prison for life, and later pardoned. Bateman's mother was one of the signers for his pardon. Cravens was captured in Missouri, charged with stealing horses and convicted on this charge. After serving his time in the Missouri penitentiary was ^{he} brought to Guthrie, convicted in Federal Court of robbing a United States post office, in Red Rock, with Bert Welty and was sentenced to prison for life.

On February 14, 1900, Mr. Dunham was married to Miss. Hally C. Saunders of Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. They have five living children. Mr. Dunham has served eight years as a peace officer in Noble County.