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 Indian-Pioneer History
 April 23, 1957

Interview with
William
 W. E. Dupree
 R. F. D. I. Vinita, Okla
 Born--Wood County, Texas
 Nov. 9, 1857

My father's name was William J. Dupree. He married Charlotte Bell and they were the parents of four children; William E, who married Fannie Wright; Emma, who married John C. Gray; Annie who married Br. A. M. Clinkscales, and Maude Ethel, who never married.

On June 11, 1883 I was married to Fannie Wright, and we are the parents of eight children, as follows; Elmer, Herbert, Emma, Wright, Bessie, Fred, Anna, and Elmer.

Parents Came Here With
Stan Watie

General Stan Watie's last wife, Sallie Caroline Bell, was my mother's sister. General Stan Watie and his mother and my father and mother came here together from Wills Valley, Georgia, and settled in Flint district.

General Stan Watie was married four times. His first wife was Elizabeth Fields; his second, Isabel Hicks; his third, Eleanor Looney and his fourth, Sallie Caroline Bell. I do not believe that Stan Watie has a living descendant from any of his wives.

Emigrates To Texas

In 1847 the "Pin Indians" were making it so hot for all the old signers of the treaty, back in Georgia, that my folks decided to emigrate to Texas.

They had already killed Major Ridge and a lot of other prominent Cherokees, and were making every effort to kill all the leaders who had signed the treaty, which forced them to leave Georgia and come to the Cherokee Nation.

Some of the families, whom I can remember as leaving Flint district in 1847 were, John Bell and his family, including my wife. The McNair family, Sam Mayes, George Mayes, Wyly Mayes, Joel Mayes, William Wirt Buffington, Lucien B. Buffington, Hooley Bell, and many others.

Stan Watie Stays

Stan Watie stayed in Flint and in 1861 organized a company of Confederate soldiers, and became their captain, and later was made a general in the Confederate army. Many of the Pin Indians and Kee-toe-wahs joined his company, and fought with him all during the war. My father was a surgeon in Watie's army.

Stand Watie was born December 12, 1806 and died September 9, 1871, and was buried on the east side of Grand river, in Delaware district, Cherokee Nation, somewhere on Honey Creek. I do not know the exact spot, or whether he has a monument, or not.

Settled In Delaware

After the war Stan Watie moved to Delaware district, and settled on the West side of Grand River, near the present site of Bernice, where he lived until his death in 1871.

The family of John Bell, who had emigrated to Texas before the war, all came back about 1868, and most of them settled in the neighborhood where Stan Watie was living, except Hoolie Bell, who settled on Cabin Creek, near the site where the Cabin Creek battle was fought during the war.

Mayes Family In Cooweescoowee

The Mayes and McNair family all settled in Cooweescoowee district, near the present site of Pryor, now Mayes County, Oklahoma. Joel and Sam Mayes became a power in Cherokee politics and both were elected to serve as principal chief, at different times.

William Wirt Buffington, also, settled near Pryor, and he received much jostling for bringing a sow and pigs overland from Texas, but he told his friends he was going to be sure he had his meat.

I brought three geese, two tame ones and a wild one I had captured and tamed.

Texas A Place Of Refuge

Before and during the war (Civil), Texas was a place of refuge for many families of Cherokees. Texas was an independent state at that time, and had vast territories unsettled and they were glad to have new settlers come, and offered them every inducement to stay, and some few did stay, but the most of the Cherokees returned to their native home after the war, and some returned when they began to allot the land to the Cherokees. I was among those who stayed in Texas until allotment came in the Cherokee Nation.

Cherokees Given Land and Grant

In 1835 the state of Texas made a treaty with the Cherokees giving them a Grant to the land which they were occupying, and they set up their own government, but the ink had scarcely become dry before the government sent surveyors into the country and began a survey of the land. The Indians were accused of Depredations, which they did not commit, and the Texas government dissolved the Cherokee government, and those who would not become citizens of the new state were forced to return to the Indian Territory. A great many stayed on as citizens of the Texas government until the war was over in the Indian Territory, and then returned to their native land.

I stayed on until 1878, when I came back to Tahlequah and attended the Male Seminary for awhile, then taught school at Sallisaw and other places in the Cherokee Nation. I went back to Texas in 1883 and married Fannie Wright and remained there seven years.

In 1890, when they began to talk allotment of land in the Cherokee Nation, I brought my wife and four children back to the Nation and settled at Vinita, where I proved up my rights as a Cherokee, and took our allotments three miles north of Vinita where I am still living.

In 1907, after statehood I helped to establish the Dupree school, which bears my name, and my son, Wright, became teacher in the school of the county, and in 1934 he was elected as County Clerk, and was re-elected in 1936.

Time Changes Everything

Sam Starr, of Stillwell, Adair county, was one of the men who emigrated to Texas, before the civil war. He told me a short time back, that he had visited the Texas Centennial, at Dallas in 1936, and went on down through Texas to Wood County, near Kilgore, where we lived during the war, just to see how the old homestead looked, after all these years. He said the country where we lived was filled up with oil derricks, and was a vast oil field, very much unlike the thinly populated country that it was before the war.

We lived near Mineola, Texas, which was about eight miles from where the school disaster, at New London happened in 1937, and in which over 400 school children were killed when a gas explosion blew up the New London School.