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Biography of Wade Nichols (White)

Ardmore, Oklahoma

Born December 18, 1866 at Choctaw Capitol,

Armstrong Acadmey, Indian Territory.

Father: Alex. Nichols Mother: Susan Boyd

Wade Nichols was born at Armstrong Academy, December 18, 1866. A year or two later his father moved with the family to old Boggy Depot, they remained there only a short while and moved to new Boggy Depot, here Wade attended school. Another pupil in the school at this time was Hyman Burris, a Chickasaw Indian, now a resident of Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

The next move was to Atoka. Here his father Alex Nichols established the first Post Office and hotel. The hotel was one of the stage stops between Fort Smith and Fort Sill.

Wade Nichols received most of his education at Harley Institute near Tishomingo. He attended school there with Holmes and Walter Colbert.

In the early ninety's the family moved to Ardmore where they have continued to make their home. Both Alex Nichols and his wife Susan Boyd Nichols have been dead for several years.

In 1902 Wade Nichols was appointed guard at the "Bull Pen"⁹⁷. He served as guard there until 1904, at that time the Federal jail was built, and he continued as guard until Statehood. Wade Nichols's daughter Moahoda is the wife of Arthur Oakley, famous airplane pilot of Ardmore.

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Field worker: Jennie Selfridge

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Story of the "Bull Pen"

Told by Wade Nichols

About 1892, when the Dalton brothers, Scar Face Jim, Cherokee Bill, and others were at the height of their nefarious careers, the government at Washington decided it could better handle the criminal element of the Indian Territory in its own back yard so to speak. So a Federal Court was established at Ardmore, Indian Territory. Another reason for the establishment of a court in the territory was the fact that the courts at Paris, Texas and Fort Smith, Arkansas had more business than they could take care of at that time. With the establishment of a court a jail was a prime necessity. A jail could not be constructed over night especially with the red-tape that goes with the construction of a Federal building. Therefore, the court ordered the erection of a square stockade made of one by twelve boxing plank, twelve feet long. In the center of this enclosure a house or large room was erected where the prisoners ate and slept. The other part of the enclosed ground was called the "run-around". In the middle of the wall on each side of the Stockade was a guard's tower. This structure became known far and wide as the "Bull Pen". It served as a jail until the present County Jail was built in 1904. Serving as guards at the jail at different times during

its existence were; Wade Nichols, Tom Roland and Mike Gorman all present old time residents of this section. 99

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