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A Bit Of Oklahoma Geneology

by *Elva Howard Deeds*

Some years ago, I was in an American History class at Southwestern with Dr. James King as instructor. To enliven the subject for bored students, Dr. King often made clever remarks about historical events. He received some cool looks from some of our older teachers (I was one of these, returning for additional credit) when a reference bordered on being "naughty." I enjoyed his class and usually sat like a grinning Cheshire cat while he lectured. Consequently, I was probably considered to be rather "lightheaded."

During a particular lecture on American heritage, Dr. King mentioned that some early Ameri-

cans were attracted to beautiful Indian maidens and wanted to move into their teepees. He used the example of reserved Englishmen. At this comment, I couldn't control my mirth, and I cackled loudly in the quiet room.

Dr. King looked at me with feigned sternness and asked, "Howard! Why did that account fill you with such glee??"

"Oh," I managed to answer, "my English grandfather came over from England and TEE-PEED!"

Our family was proud of our Indian grandmother. She was tall, slender, and very neat. As a small child, I was intrigued by a dainty little pipe she always kept hidden

GRANDPARENTS

in her apron pocket, smoking only in private moments alone.

Grandmother was half Cherokee. She had been moved with her family to Missouri during the removal west. We aren't sure of some of her history; however, a family member found her name in some archives of the Cherokee Tribe and traced her lineage to some historical characters. But my grandmother wasn't proud of her Indian heritage; therefore, she and her brother wouldn't accept any recognizance by the American government. When my grandfather met her, she had just been widowed, with two small children and no means of support. Her husband had been a lawman, murdered by an outlaw. Grandmother had watched the townspeople hang him. She lived on for a long time, dying in Enid at age 93.

Genealogy became a favorite topic when I went to a reunion in Ava, Missouri, of my mother's family this past summer. The

Spurlocks are numerous in Missouri, and I enjoyed all the lively and warm discussion as well as meeting so many close relatives. I even changed some concepts about my heritage while I was there. For instance, I assumed that my fair-skinned, auburn-haired mother was Scots-Irish, but I discovered that she was half German. My maternal grandmother was a descendant of the Durens who established Duren, Germany.

Despite a growing interest in family history, I am not dedicated enough to record and document much of what I have found. I have two cousins who are doing an admirable job of that. I'm likely to accentuate the good that I hear about one of us and keep silent about possible failures.■

ELVA HOWARD DEEDS, a retired public-school teacher, lives and writes on a farm near Sentinel.