

Who was Chief Russell Sage Carter ?.



This is Russell Sage Carter in his prime. Born August 2nd, 1898 in Burnham Township, Pawnee, Oklahoma. He died on May 24th 1994, in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri at the age of 95 years old. His father was William Joseph Carter and his mother was Sarah Margaret Johnson Carter.

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FOREWARD

History is lost if it is not shared. Russell Sage Carter was a friend of mine, I would sit for hours in his living room listening to his life's stories. I have considered writing about his life for several years and now is the time. Russell wrote several books and if you get a chance to read them, you will be glad you did. I have been an Ozark Region historian since high school and that is how I was introduced to this man and his unique life. I bought two of his books, including, Retracing Boon's Trace, and realized that this man may still be alive. This was about 1986. His life covered several states, Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Colorado Wyoming and Texas. This book covers some Ozark Region stories, but is about the life of a man who loved life and loved to tell others about his adventures.

Putting his stories together into book form was inspired by his grand daughter, Sherie, who bought him a recorder and had him record the stories. Sherie started typing the pages, but eventually a class at the Missouri State University transcribed them for him. Russell seemed to be able to do anything, he copied and bound the books himself in his garage.

Russell was up in age when I started visiting with him and his roaming was over, but he loved to talk about his adventures. We had these visits up to his death. He would call me on the phone just to tell me a joke.

I have tried to put dates to different periods of time, but my memory or his has made it where I can just estimate the time line, so realize the dates may be off a year or two. I hope you enjoy his stories as much as I do.

R.D.F.

Here is a list of his books, I may have missed some.

From Pawnee Bill to the Moon, 101 Years of Southwest Heritage

Retracing Boones Trail And Trappers Wife

The Building of Fort Leonard Wood, and the Doctor

What Goes on Outside Fort Leonard Wood

History of the Great American Cowboy

Little Blue Rose The Cheyenne

Below The Thunder or Uncle Tom of Bois D' Arc

FAMILY BACKGROUND

Russell Sage Carter had a rich family background. He wrote a lot about his heritage and even bragged about his “cousin Jimmy Carter”. I think that was his way of saying most all Carters were related. Russell said that his father was almost full blood of Cherokee and Chickashaw ancestry, while his mother was one fourth Cheyenne. They had been living in Greene County Missouri among the white population and was living like any other farm family in the area. When growing up and living among the Pawnee and Cheyenne, Russell did not know who he really was.

I will just go back to the year 1850. Russells Grandfather, John Carter, at 18 years old, was living with his parents in a Greene County Missouri town called Bois D’Arc. Several people had heard about the gold strikes in California and he was one that decided he would go get his fortune. He joined a wagon train of pioneers and started the long trip. They got as far as the town of Tulsa and the wagon train foreman decided it was time to take a few days to rest. They went a little farther and stopped at a Chichasaw settlement. This group of Indians had been moved to the Indian Territory by the government. Most of them had been living on their farms back east in peace with the white man until the government decided to take their land. This group was part of a larger group 978 people, they were forced to bury 59 people who died along the way. They did not like their new land in southern Oklahoma that they were given by the Federal Government, so they left during the night and started a settlement just west of Tulsa among the Panca and other tribes. They welcomed the wagon train and was glad to help them.

This is where John Carter met his soon to be wife, Lissie Gramintucket, a full blooded Chickasaw Indian. They were married with the full Chickasaw tribal ceremony and California was forgotten. John took his new bride home to the old homestead at Bois D’ Arc, Missouri and set up his new home where they had several children including William Joseph Carter in 1856, Russell Carters father. “Grannie Lissie” kept a diary that, she kept her whole life, it included a lot of her family memories of the trail of tears and she talked about their experience whenever she could.

Several years later William Joseph Carter married Sarah Margaret Johnson who lived a few miles from his home and they lived in the Bois D’ Arc area and raised their family, until “Joseph” as he was called decided to move on. Joseph and his wife, Sarah, didn’t seem to stay in one place very long. Russell and his father were both wonderers, a new adventure was always ahead. They always had the “Pioneering Spirit” and wanted to move west to the new country.

Joseph was a Baptist preacher and when they moved to Pawnee he started working as a missionary to the Indians and was well liked because he could speak their language.

1885 CHEROKEE STRIP LAND RACE

Russell Carter said, “[This was the greatest horse race ever run.](#)” He wasn’t even born yet, but his father told him about his disappointing try. After the Civil War, Washington decided it was time to open up some of the Cherokee land to settlement. The Cherokee Strip would be cleared of anyone who was on the land and an orderly run to stake your claim to land would be held in March, 1885. This was the first of three runs. Tho illegal, many whites, called SOON-ERS, snuck in ahead of time and was able to claim most of the good farm land before the race started.

Pawnee Bill (Gordon William Lillie), fought the idea, but lost the battle. He was selected to oversee the start of this great race. The border was lined with people on horses, wagons, buggies, and some on foot, waiting for the signal of Pawnee Bills gun and the bugle call. The idea of 160 acres of free land was too good to be true. It was said that over one hundred thousand people were lined up along the border. Before it was done several murders were committed.

William Joseph Carter and his friend named Tom Turnback were there, ready to get their free land. The Calvary that had been holding the people back, moved into a V shape to let the people through. The race was on. Carter said that the dust was knee deep and water was scarce, the water you did find was not fit to drink. Carter and Turnback had heard of good land to the southwest about a hundred miles away and that is where they were headed. All they knew was that it was good bottom land between two rivers. They rode their horses as fast as they could, pacing their animals to cover as much ground as possible. They were happy, they were way ahead of the pack and made camp for the night. The Second night they camped near a small stream and kept their horses close so no one would steal them.

The next morning Carter looked around and said, “This land looks pretty good right here.” Turnback convinced him that they were so far ahead of the pack that if they had to, they would come back to this spot and claim it. So on they went, better land was just ahead. They wanted good farm land for hay and maybe where some good timber would be handy. It seemed like everywhere they went from there, someone had the claim and a six shooter to protect it with. They had no choice, they would go back to where they camped the night before. So when they got back to thier campsite, they saw, within fifty yards of where they had camped was a tent already set up. Disapointed they moved on and went home. They knew another run would be made soon, so they decided, maybe next time.

1893 CHEROKEE STRIP LAND RACE

William Joseph Carter and his friend, Tom Turnback had their second chance for free land on September 16, 1893. This was going to be the biggest land opening to date. There was people lined up for about twenty miles along the north border of Oklahoma waiting for their chance. To quote Russell Carter, his father told him that:

“Gamblers, Preachers, Medicine Men, Rich and Poor, Good and Bad were lined up. It was a sound like ten thousand stampeding Buffaloes. While it made history it was a government mess. A rushing scramble, chuck full of hardships and near disasters.”

This time the two came prepared to stay. They brought a hack full of provisions to help them with their claims. Billy Turnback found land on the North Canadian River, but William Joseph Carter didn't like the salt grass bottoms and went on to greener pastures. He finally found what he was looking for near Pawnee, Oklahoma. An Indian agency and school had already been established there. The problem was, all the land had been claimed. Carter soon found a SOONER by the name of Drew or Guy Bradley, who was homesick for his Missouri home. They made a trade, the 160 acres of Pawnee land for Carters home in Bos D' Arc. As Russell says in “From Pawnee Bill to the Moon”, his father traded “everything but the wife and kids”. They both wanted to make things legal so they walked to town so they could make up a contract for the trade. They went into the saloon to see if anyone could write the contract for them, but nobody in the saloon could read or write. They decided that a mans word is good enough. I don't know if they ever legally transfered the property into the Carter name. Carter went back home in Missouri to prepare for the long hard move. They didn't actually move until 1898, both families left on the same day.

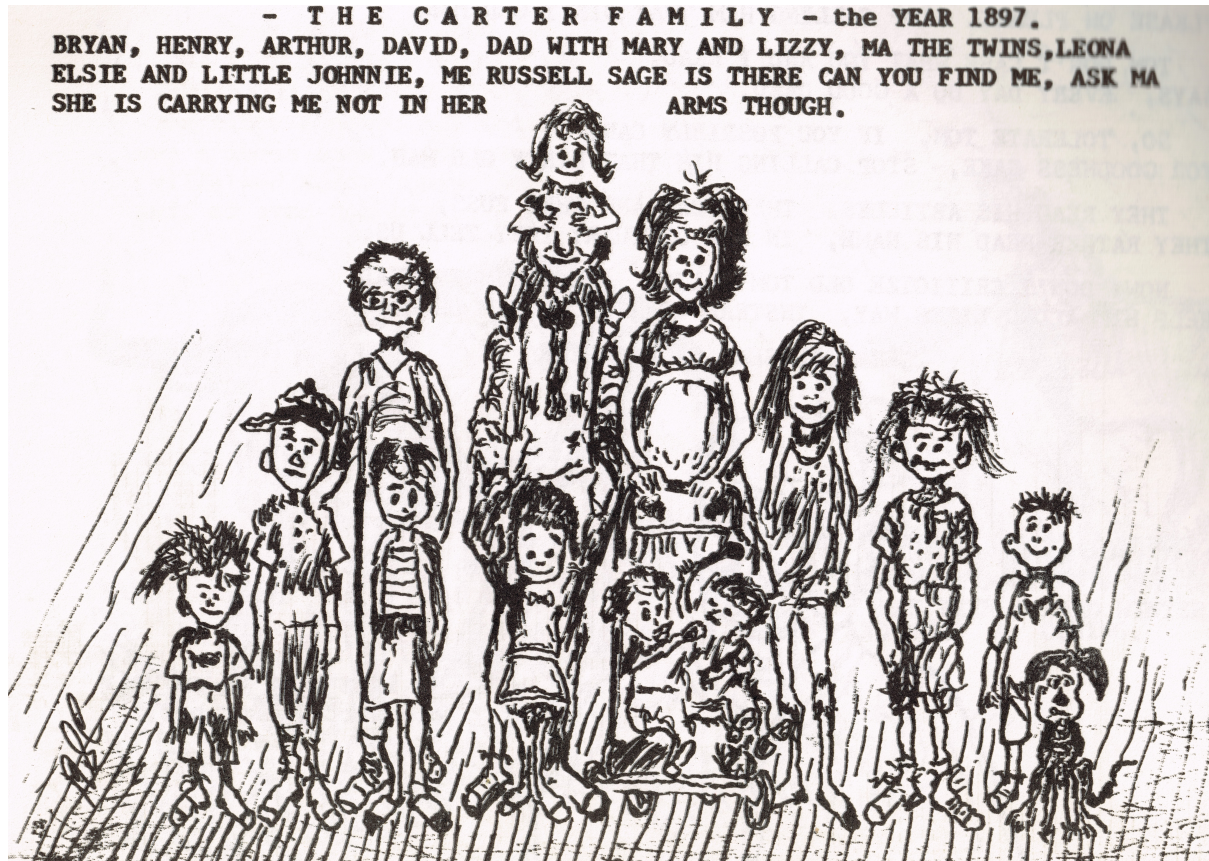
PAWNEE BILL GORDON WILLIAM LILLIE



Gordon William Lillie, Pawnee Bill, worked his whole life on behalf of the Pawnee Nation and started a Wild West show based in Pawnee Oklahoma. The State of Oklahoma operates a Museum on his old ranch and it is well worth visiting. Even though he was against opening up the Cherokee Strip, the government used him to help during these events.

During my research, I was able to find two deeds for some of the property where the Pawnee Bill Museum is located now. Both were dated in 1911, one was transferring land from Newton W. Lillie to Gordon W. Willie and his wife Susan A. Lillie. The other one was from C. P. Rock, a single person to Gordon and his wife.

1898 - RUSSELL'S PARRENTS MOVE TO PAWNEE, OKLAHOMA



Above is a drawing that was in "From Pawnee Bill to the Moon". This is a drawing done by Russell himself of the Carter family as they appeared when they arrived at Pawnee Oklahoma. If you look close you can see that Russell Sage Carter is due in a few months.

In 1897 Pawnee Oklahoma had three stores, a livery stable, two saloons, a ladies hat shop, a church and a four room boarding house. It had a few plank sidewalks, and a big twelve foot windmill at the railroad depot to fill the steam engines when they came through. Most people used a small spring nearby.

The move to Pawnee was long and hard, this large family of ten or eleven kids with another one on the way, I never could figure out how many children they actually had. They had to move at night sometimes because of the stock they were bringing with them. While moving along the strip they could see the camp fires of the claims all across the land. Sometimes you would see groups of fires where towns had formed, with crude buildings or tents. A new state was being born. They now realized that the Bradley family had been living in a tent and it was no longer there. What they got for the nice home in Missouri was a pile of rocks that the Bradleys had intended to build a home with. Mr. Carter started work on a one room rock house, but

realized that his next child was going to come before it was done. His large family was living in the covered wagon, under it and even in a pup tent made using the wagon tounge propped up. Russell said that if the wolf had showed up at their door, they would have eaten him.

They were camped just outside of Pawnee near a large camp of Pawnee Indians. The Pawnee Indians liked Joseph Carter because he could speak their language, they gave him the name ODIE MAN, this was a great honor only given to a few. It was similar to leader, or medicine man. Joseph had been a spiritual leader, he was a preacher who served the Indians for years. He became good friends with the Pawnee Chief Sitting Bull and Son of Eagle who were in charge. He sometimes helped as an interpretor when needed. I think Chief Sitting Bull's real name was Tahirasawica', but I can not be sure of the spelling.

Note, this was not the Soux Sitting Bull, The Soux and Pawnee were enemies and Tahirasawica' was a Pawnee Scout and helped the U.S. Calvery try to catch Sitting Bull. They were about to overtake the Soux near the Canadian border when Sitting Bull was able to see them comming and ran over the border into Canada. The U.S. Calvery stopped at the border and let him go, this outraged Tahirasawica' and he could not understand why they had to let him go. After much arguing and yelling, he saw the abandoned Soux camp and noticed Sitting Bulls Teepee with all the markings on it. He declared that from now on, he would be called Sitting Bull and if the Soux Chief wanted to challenge him, he would gladly scalp him. No one wanted to challenge him.

Old Chief Sitting Bull saw the situation that the Carter family was in and felt sorry for them. The wife was pregnant and ready to give birth at any time. He went over to Joseph Carter and offered to let her use his tent until she had her baby. He would move to an extra tent that Chief Son of Eagle had as long as they needed it. The Carter family moved into the finest buckskin teepee they had ever seen and three days later, with the help of an Indian grannie woman and Sitting Bull, on August 2nd, 1898, Russell Sage Carter was born in Sitting Bulls Teepee near Pawnee Oklahoma. Note: According to Russell, he figured he was Two Thirds Cherokee. The last of eleven children.

Russell said: [“This teepee was sitting on the south side of Blue Hawk Peak, the property was later owned by Pawnee Bill, where his Museum now stands.”](#)

Sitting Bull knew what hard times were. The Pawnee once was a large Nation of thousands living on their large reservation in Nebraska. After years of hardship they now lived near the little town of Pawnee Oklahoma that was named after them, but their population was down to 629 people as counted in 1901. He was trying to keep their traditions from disapearing and even travelled to Washington DC to explain how important keeping their traditions were to his people.

CHIEF SUN EAGLE

Chief Sun Eagle was a Christian and would quote his version of the 23rd Psalms to anyone who would listen. Here may be a good place to put his version as remembered by Russell..

1. The Great Spirit above a Shepherd Chief is, I am His and with Him I want not.
2. He throw me a rope it called Love, with it He draw me to where the grass is green and the water is smooth, where me can eat and lay down and am satisfied.
3. Sometime the Heart is very weak and fall down but He lifts me up again and draws me back into good smooth trails, His name is Wonderful.
4. Someday me have to walk through valley called Death between high hills, I will not be afraid, for the Spirit Cheif will be with me always and a rope of love and a staff He give me to lean on, and I shall fear no evil.
5. His food is spread all over before me plenty, even in front of all my enemies of this world, He puts His hand upon my head and all pain is gone, my cup am all time running over with Love.
6. Even though hard to see sometimes, yet all good and merciful things shall be with me all the days of my life, and when I return to the mother earth my soul shall go to live for ever with the Great Spirit above. Even though me be red skin it make no difference.

In Russell's books he would quote Indian versions of Bible scriptures that showed the interpretations that they understood. I might add some of them later.



CHIEF SITTING BULL

Tahirussawichi (Sitting Bull)

Photo - Gill - 1900

Through my research, his original name was Kiwikutiwilit before he changed it around 1890. I have found several different spellings, I think the best way is Tahirasawica'.

Old Chief Sitting Bull would visit with the Carters anytime he could, usually around dinner time. It took Mrs. Carter a long time to get used to his visits, he would just walk in and sit down without her seeing him. One time she was busy cooking dinner with her door wide open and she glanced out the door and there he was standing in the doorway. It was different this time, he had just returned from a special council and wanted to see if she had anything to eat. He was in full Indian dress, including war paint. She let out a scream and slid under the bed. The old chief just sat down in the doorway laughing. When Joseph came home a few minutes later, he saw Sitting Bull sitting on the ground in the doorway laughing. He said "Squaw under bed", they all had a good time making fun of her.

In a wordpress.com blog named Pawneeland, it has some interesting information on Sitting Bull. He was born in 1830 and studied to be a doctor. It confirms that he served as a Pawnee Scout to defend against the invasion of the Sioux tribe, which makes the story of him taking the Sioux Sitting Bull's teepee as a trophy after running him into Canada seem true. Also, when the Pawnee were moved to Oklahoma, he would doctor the sick in his tent. It also mentions that he once took in a white neighbors boy who had a broken leg until it was healed. This could very well have been a Carter Kid.



Photo - Thomas Croft - 1900 ?

The Sitting Bull family built a earthlodge for special meetings, Russell told about his father being invited to one of these meetings and he took Russell with him. He said there would be no way that they would have been welcome if they were not such good friends. Here are a couple of photos of this "Mudlodge".

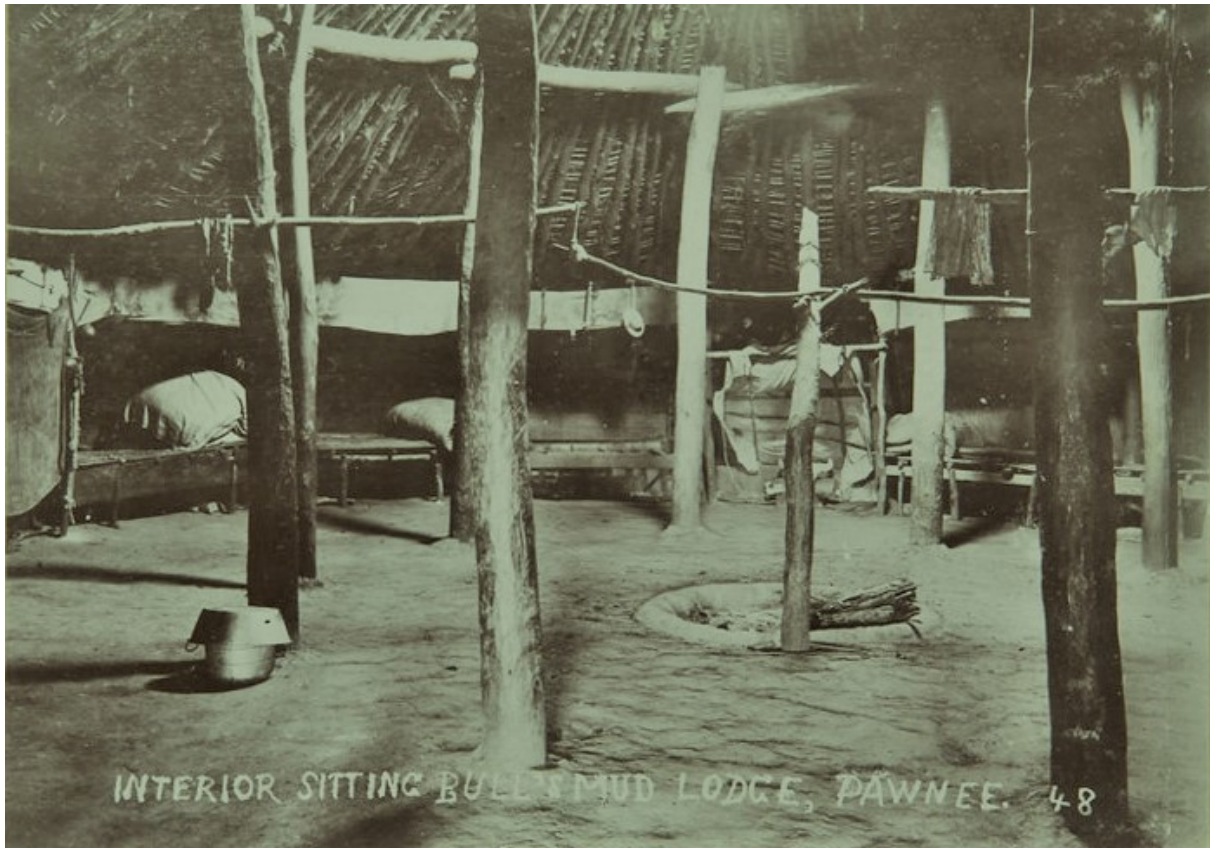


Photo - Thomas Croft - 1900 ?

There was an Indian burial ground on the Carter property at Pawnee. They left it alone and sometimes they would attend a burial service. Joseph Carter was a minister to the Indians of the area until his eyesight went bad enough that he had to stop in 1906. The family talked about how the Pawnee seemed to live to die and were not afraid of death. They would never make a child leave a sick relative that was dying, they actually wanted their children to experience and understand death. Joseph Carter even took Russell along to Stick Carrier's home, a Pawnee Indian, to help bury his wife. The Carter girls cleaned up three different Indian burial grounds and planted flowers around them, the Indians of the area appreciated their work and loved them.

Russells father, Joseph Carter, knew the Pawnee and Cheyenne language very well and even knew the Sequoya or Cherokee alphabet. This made him very popular as an interpreter between the whites and Indians. They had visitors all the time because he rented their land for cattle and hay, he even gave them a beef to butcher when needed. Of course, they had to feed the visitors and this kept Russells mother busy.

Arthur Carter

I really haven't found much about Russell Carters brothers and sisters. Russell told a lot about his oldest brother Arthur, his nickname used by his family was "The Outlaw". Arthur was 21 years old when Russell was born and he was ready for an adventure at a young age and spent time in the wild west when it was really wild. He worked on ranches from Old Mexico to Canada. He even rode shotgun for a stagecoach company hauling gold dust from the west. The family would never hear from him until they saw him coming down the road.

Arthur did come home when he found out that the family moved to Pawnee and did some work for Pawnee Bill, they were both about the same age and he somewhat patterned his life that way. He helped take care of the Buffalo's and wanted to ride bucking bronks in the show, but they were a dime a dozen so that didn't work out. He ended up playing the part of a cattle rustler. A group of sleepy wranglers would be around the camp fire and Arthur would sneak up and cut one of the longhorns out of the herd and the chase was on. Those cowboys would chase him around the tent several times and when they caught him they would hang him on the tree that was conveniently there. He got tired of this and moved on to his next adventure.

Arthur was Russell's favorite brother and he spent hours following him around and listening to the stories of his wild west adventures. For a time he was even a U.S. Deputy Marshal. When he was riding shotgun for a stage line and got a strong box with Wells Fargo written on it, he would be worried until they got it delivered because it almost always was a gold shipment. He rode shotgun on coaches and wagons between Cripple Creek and the old Golden Cycle Mill in Colorado City. When the Cripple Creek short line was built, he rode shotgun for them. At this time the Golden City Mill was the largest mill for extracting gold.

One thing he did do as a cowboy was taking thousands of long horn cattle along the Chisholm Trail to Fort Peck, on the Indian Reservation. The roundup was just south of San Angelo Texas. Cattle was gathered from as far as Matamoros Mexico. This was among the last of the large cattle drives, the land was being divided up by the settlers who didn't want them to cross their land. This drive took almost a year to deliver their herd, the longhorns actually gained weight along the way.

Russell Sage Carter - 1898

Russell's mother, Sarah, was in a very weak condition when he was born. They had just travelled all the way from Missouri in wagons, over rough roads and across rivers, it is hard to imagine how hard it was on a pregnant woman. At first Sarah was scared to death of the Pawnee Chief Sitting Bull, but soon realized how kind he was. She was over forty years old when this surprise happened, a baby boy. With the big family and her being so weak and not able to nurse him, several Pawnee women would come help take care of Russell. It seemed like they just loved him as much as she did.

One of his Pawnee mothers was in the Carter home nursing him when he was about four weeks old. When he fell asleep, she packed him up and told Mrs. Carter that she would just take him home and bring him back to visit when she could. This woman had a baby of her own about Russell's age and had plenty of milk. Now Russell had two mothers, but lived in the Pawnee village that was just across the road. The Pawnee were at peace with the white man and some of them even joined the U.S. Cavalry as soldiers and scouts.

As Russell grew older, he was given free range of the Pawnee village or camp. He would get up in the morning to roam around. When he got hungry all he would have to do is ask someone and they would feed him, when night came he just went to a tent or home and he would be welcome. Everyone loved this little boy who seemed to love his life among them. This lasted until he was three years old, when his father decided it was time for him to come home..

I was able to find the family in the 1900 Federal Census Records.
Burnham Township, Pawnee County, Oklahoma

Joseph Carter	Male	Age 44	White	Birth	Dec 1856	Missouri
Sarah M Carter	Fem	Age 40	White	Birth	Oct 1860	Missouri
Henry C Carter	Male	Age 13	White	Birth	Dec 1887	Missouri
Elsie T Carter	Fem	Age 9	White	Birth	Jan 1891	Missouri
Leona J Carter	Fem	Age 7	White	Birth	Nov 1893	Missouri
Bryan O Carter	Male	Age 4	White	Birth	Aug 1896	Missouri
Russel Sage Carter	Male	Age 1	White	Birth	Aug 1899	Oklahoma
Arthur B Carter	Male	Age 21	White	Birth	Jan 1879	Missouri

As I have said, I really don't know how many children the Carters had. This is the official record. Some family members may have been living with relatives.

Russell Sage Carter - Age Three

One thing Russell was good at was running away. As far back as he could remember, the village was his home. He had a hard time figuring out who this man was, his father, he would hunt him down and take him to the rock house, feed him and then put him to bed. He had no problem with this, but first thing in the morning, off he would go again. This started to be every day, and then the man would whip him and tell him to stop running off. Russell at three years old was his own man and he didn't like being told what to do. Some days his father found him over a mile away hiding under a bush or somewhere he thought he wouldn't be seen. It went on this way until his dad decided he had a way to take care of this problem.

Russell's father finally got tired of this, and came up with a plan. He found a light chain that was pretty long and had little Russell watch as he made a leather strap to put around his leg. The curious three year old was proud of that leather band around his ankle and had no problem letting this man put it on. Then he attached the chain to the leather band and walked the little boy outside and attached the other end to a large chunk of wood. Russell walked around that log to see how far he could go and eventually sat down on that chunk of wood and watched the people walking by. Every evening, his father would bring him into the house so he could eat with the large family. The next morning the family would get up and after breakfast Russell and his father would go out front and attach him to the log again and move the log if Russell wanted to explore new territory. If he could, Russell would roll that log around to get something he wanted. If he could he would get someone walking by to move the chunk of wood for him. He loved that log, it was his. He didn't want any of the other children touching HIS log, he would have his father run any of the other children off who touched it. One day he asked Chief Sitting Bull to move the log for him and the old Chief acted like he was going to steal his log, Russell cried and begged for him to leave it for him.

He remembered thinking this family really likes him, wanting him to stay with them. Having one of their children chained up in their yard became the talk of the neighborhood. One morning his father forgot to chain him up and Russell hunted him down to have him put the chain on. Soon his father told him that he didn't need the chain anymore, just come home at night. Some days Russell got so lonesome, he missed his log. He even tried to tie it on his leg by himself, but it would just fall off. Russell finally decided he would just have to remember to go home at night, which he did, most of the time anyway.

William Jennings Bryan CAMPAIGN SPEECH PAWNEE, OKLAHOMA -1904

This is just one of the events that Russell remembered and put in one of his books, it is just a part of the daily life in Pawnee Oklahoma in 1904.

Russell Sage Carter was six years old when his dad loaded all the kids in their old wagon and went to town to see William Jennings Bryan. Bryan had ran for president two times already and this would be his third try. He was coming to town to give a speech. The Carters had put a thick layer of hay in the wagon bed to make the trip easier. Their mother brought a large basket of apples and other food for the day.

When they got to town, it seemed like everyone from miles around had gathered in the little town, waiting for the train to bring this mysterious man into town. Russell didn't understand why this man was so important. The city leaders had cleared the town of anything on the street that they thought would make a bad impression and they had several buildings and shacks around the depot painted. They even made everyone to move all the horses, wagons and buggies to a lot away from everything. A horse that a lady was riding spooked and ran through the crowd on outside of town and on down the road, with a cowboy chasing them. Some of the local Indians showed up all decked out in their best uniforms. Now this was exciting to a six year old.

The Sheriff arrested anyone that he thought might cause trouble during the event. This gave the children something to do. Here is one thing Russell wrote in "Little Blue Rose The Cheyenne":

"Oh yes some of the bravest boys slipped up and threw rocks to bounce off that little old rock Caliboose where they had the drunks, I was not in that bunch you see I was a ... breed, and half breeds those days was the lowest step on the humanity ladder, so I had to be somewhat like a ministers son, behave myself."

This led to his dislike of school. He didn't fit in, his family was considered white, but he really did have a problem getting along with anyone at the white school.

When Russell was 95 years old, August 5, 1993, he said this in a newspaper article in the Springfield Leader & Press newspaper.

"I never told my own kids I was Indian because I was afraid they (white people) would mistreat them the way I was mistreated." "They'd beat on us and fight on us, and we couldn't learn anything."

1904 - WORKING FOR PAWNEE BILL

Russell liked his oldest brother Arthur who was working for Pawnee Bill at the time. During the off season his brother was helping take care of the buffalo, so Russell was right there “working” for Pawnee Bill. While talking to Pawnee Bill, he asked if he could kill a buffalo as payment for working that year and the showman apparently said ok. Russell did not let him forget, at the end of the season he was ready to collect and told Pawnee Bill he was ready to collect. You know how funny this must have looked when this little six year old boy was demanding that he got the pick of the herd too kill. The old showman went to one of the buildings and brought back a bow and arrow telling Russell that he could have any buffalo he wanted.

This little six year old went to crying and squalling and begging for a gun. Pawnee Bill, I guess figured, what could go wrong so he handed Russell a small caliber pistol and said that he had one chance, only one shot. He thought that the thick hide of a buffalo would just cause the bullet to bounce off.

Now Russell had his chance and he took his time. He went to some brush and picked a small branch and walked into the small herd of buffalo looking for a victim. To Pawnee Bills surprise, he started switching one of the biggest bulls, getting it upset over this little kid swiping at his hind end. The big bull had enough of this and stopped, turned around and lowered it's head getting ready to send this boy flying. Russell already had his pistol ready, it was almost touching the buffalo's forehead when he shot his one bullet. Pawnee Bill couldn't believe what he saw, the buffalo dropped dead in his tracks and Russell gave him back his pistol.

I don't know how Russell got the buffalo home, but his brother, Arthur and some other Pawnee Ranch hands probably did it for him. They butchered it and Russell provided meat for his family and friends for quite a while. I am sure he shared some with the Pawnee camp living across the road.

Apparently after butchering the buffalo, they just drug the head and other unwanted parts into the trees behind the house. Years later on one of Russells trips through the region, he was able to find the skull of this buffalo and proudly had it on display. About 1990, on one of my visits to his house, he showed me this buffalo skull and told me about how he got it.

Russell had a hard life, he was independent and had to take care of himself from as far back as he could remember. His family loved him, he was the youngest of twelve children and sort of got lost in the croud. In this book, you will be amazed that anyone could have lived a life like his. Through all the trials in his life, he had faith in God, that he would be alright.

1904 - PAWNEE SCHOOL

All the real schooling Russell got was in Indian schools, he only went to the “Paleface” school for a short time and had to constantly fight. He was proud of his long black hair and had to fight every day, because they wanted him to cut his hair. When he went to the Indian school, they treated him as equal and everyone got along. He said, “Experience is the best teacher in the world, but she is rough sometimes.”

When the Pawnees and other Indians were moved to the Oklahoma Territory, they were told that Indian schools would be provided for them. The Pawnees found out that it might be true, but there was only three in the whole territory. Some of the children in Pawnee would have to be sent to a boarding school, the girls refused to go, the only boys that went were from families that thought that it was important for their children to be educated.

It was a cold winter night that Russell was sleeping in the barn loft. He had gathered loose hay as a bed and had covered himself with hay to keep warm. He felt something crawling into the pile of straw with him. At first he thought it was one of their dogs and kicked it to push it away. It was one of his friends, Echo Hawk, that had been sent away to school. It was November and Russell said later that he had travelled over 100 miles. I don't think it was that far, but in the freezing rain it probably felt that far to come home. While doing research, I did find out that the local Pawnee school was too small, so some children were sent to schools farther away. He told Russell not to tell anyone because he did not want to go back. Russell's older brother Arthur was visiting, so Russell went to get him for help because Echo Hawk was wet and cold and something needed to be done before he got sick.

Echo Hawk told how they wouldn't let the boys play Indian games or hunt. All they did was eat and go to school. He didn't want to go back. Arthur dried the little six year old boy off and Russell who was also six held him close, where he slept until morning. The next day Arthur told Russell's father, Joseph Carter, what had happened the night before. After talking to the boy, he felt that he had the answer.

Since the School was on the Carter property and the Carters built it almost entirely by themselves, Joseph Carter decided that Echo Hawk would go to school in the white mans school with Russell. This did start some trouble, but it did work out for a while. The problem was that Echo Hawk was just the first Pawnee pupil that wanted to go home. It wasn't very long before at least four more “red skins” started coming to school in the small one room school house. The complaints started coming in, so Joseph Carter called a meeting, he reminded everyone that the school was on his property and that an Indian graveyard was also on the property, so the best thing to do is build a bigger and better white school somewhere else. Everyone agreed and soon they had a bigger school about a half mile west of the old one. Now Pawnee had it's own Indian School near Blue Hawk Creek. This school was probably being used as their church, like most rural schools were.

The Pawnee Chief Sitting Bull was very happy with what Joseph Carters had done, he even made him an honorary Chief of the Pawnee Tribe and he was given the name, Odie Man Chief. The Chief went to Joseph Carter and asked what they should do now. Joseph had official

claim to the land that the school house was on and the Indian cemetery was on, so he just transferred title to the three acres of land over to the Chief. This was 1904, Russell said that he thought that this was the first school owned by the Indians in the territory. An Indian girl came back from college in Oklahoma City and was the new teacher. Russell never went to the white man's school again.

I am not sure if it was at this school, but Russell remembered a teacher named White Sage, she was a beautiful Indian maiden who managed to go to two years of college. She was known for her singing abilities and was invited to get together and sometimes funerals to sing. Little Russell loved her and everyone enjoyed being around her.

Between 1898 and 1905, the population of the Pawnee area was mainly Indians. Russell and his classmates would roam the area visiting the various Indian camps. At that time, the camps consisted of 10 to 100 families living together as groups. There were the regular canvas teepees that was made out of the canvas supplied by the government, but they also had mud huts and log cabins in them. They would have their own meeting houses or just a shaded area for their meetings.

As the boys wandered, they were welcomed to stay the night if they were too far from home. Russell said that there was a rule, the boys slept in a group and the girls slept in another group, you better not break that rule. The parents usually slept in the middle.

About the time that Oklahoma became a state, a rock hospital and the Pawnee Indian School was built in Pawnee. After having their own school for a couple of years outside of town, the older children were invited to start attending the new Indian school in town. They would have to ride their horses into town and a stable was provided for them to keep them in. One of Russell's close friends, Little Echo Hawk ended up liking school and went on to college. He had two other close friends that didn't like school any more than he did, Arthur Trailhorse, who was named after Russell's older brother and Barb Raincloud. Sitting on the hard benches would make Russell, Arthur and Barb eager to get out of there.

As soon as they were free to leave they all would be roaming the woods, creeks, hollows and the plains to the west of Pawnee. They would go farther each time, sometimes not being able to make it to school the next day. They loved to hunt day and night, they would take what they killed and take it to the closest village and give it to the thankful people who would welcome them into their teepees or home. When winter came, they were welcome to sleep at any of the Indian Hogans or camps they found.

It wasn't very long before they decided that school was just not for them, so they went exploring to see what they could find. Nothing like this could happen today, but a few of the towns they visited were miles away from home. The first town they came across was Glenco, then Stillwater, then Guthrie, Enid, they even went as far as Oklahoma City. This went on for about a year, they had no problem finding places to live and eat. All they had to do was catch some game and walk into an Indian camp, giving it to them and they were welcome. The local Indians seemed to be proud of them being able to live free and roam the country. Echo Hawk decided he liked school and decided not to go with them, he stayed in school.

1905 - CHEYENNE CAMP

While wondering, the boys decided to stay a while at a Cheyenne Camp in the Cheyenne Arapaho reservation along the Canadian River in what is now Dewey County Oklahoma. This is where he was given the title of Honorary Chief by Chief Tallbull for somehow saving his daughters life. Also, while he was there, the Chief's son "Little Rol" was killed by the law in town. There had been a robbery and when someone saw Little Tol in town he started shooting and killed him. The Tallbull family took it hard and started calling Russell, Little Toll. He was quite a bit younger than Little Tol, but they gave him his possessions including a brand new buckskin suit with all the beautiful decorations on it. Mother Tallbull had to fix it so it would fit Russell. Now his official name was Chief Rol Tallbull.

Russell always went along on the game hunts with the Chief and his hunters. The government was restricting where they could hunt because the settlers were taking over all their hunting grounds and they would have conflict with the Indians. Game was hard to find. One fall they were very low on meat and none to be found. Someone told them that there was still buffalo in Palo Duro Canyon, so they decided they would take the long trip to Texas on one more hunt. When you are hungry, you will do whatever it takes to feed your family, so they started planning for the trip.

They knew they would not get permission to go, so they had to sneak away at night so the Calvary would not see them leave. They would take Little Tol (Russell) and another boy to take care of the horses and collect firewood along the way. They were able to sneak out of the reservation without being seen and almost two months later returned after a successful hunt with enough meat to last the whole winter. Everyone in camp was happy to see their men coming home with their traditional food.

Russell had worn his brand new buckskin outfit during this hunt. He found out that it had not been cured long enough. Through all the rain and bad weather along the trip it shrunk up and almost strangled him. He watched as Mother Tallbull cut it off him and doctored his bruised and bleeding skin. She laughed as she was cleaning him because this was the first time she realized that he was part white man. His skin was a lot whiter now that he was clean.

Russell was only seven, but knew he needed money for new clothes. He decided to go to the Contonement Indian Agency across the river to find a job. None of the young full blood Indian friends would go with him, they were afraid to go to the Indian Agency. This is near where Reno Oklahoma is now.

The Indian agent had an Indian wife and she took Russell in and helped him find a job. He would be a wrangler on a horse caravan going into the southern Colorado mountains. At that time there was no roads, so his job was to take care of and load up the pack horses every day. They advanced enough money to buy warm clothes and boots for the long trip. He said some of them mean pack horses would play tricks on him and he had to learn how to be smarter than they were.

He came back to the Cheyenne camp with new clothes and money in his pocket. He was ready to move on to the next adventure. He talked his Pawnee friends into going with him.

While they were in this Cheyenne camp along the Canadian River, they had met two Cheyenne boys who had the same roaming spirit that they had and they joined up with them. Now they had Russell who was Cherokee/Chickasaw, two Pawnee and two Cheyenne traveling together and they decided to just keep going west. Soon they found themselves in El Paso Texas sleeping in the stockyards, they had made it this far on foot and with only a blanket each and no money. When an old cowboy found them the next morning, he told them if they would clean up in the horse trough and get halfway clean, he would buy them breakfast.

They stayed at the stockyards for some time working with the wild horses for very little pay. When they started to draw too much attention, they decided it was time to move on. Mexico was just a few days away.

For a few years this small group of runaways worked on ranches in Texas and even went on short cattle drives and getting a reputation of being hard workers. They did have some troubles. After working for a rancher for several weeks, they realized that he was not very honest. They decided to move on and requested their pay. They were just run off and told they were not getting anything for their hard work. After they left, they circled back and cut a fat steer out of the herd and killed him, taking all the meat they could haul. They had a well deserved feast the next few days.

When Russell found himself with several Pawnee and Cheyenne boys running and hiding from the Calvary, their goal, was Mexico. If they could get to Mexico they would be free. They didn't have much trouble outrunning the Calvary, but staying out of the range of their bullets was hard. After dodging bullets for a while, one got little Barb Raincloud in the leg. They were lucky to find some friendly Arapahoes, who took care of him. They traded with them, they would help Barb, if the others hunted for them while they were there. Russell didn't come out without getting injured himself. He dove behind a bolder about the time a bullet hit in front of him, rocks and dirt flew into his eye and blinded one of his eyes. As he told me this story, he wiped the tears out of his eyes and said ["Sometimes it still bothers me"](#).

They had saved up enough money to buy two "scrub Ponies" so they could take turns riding. When they got to the Rio Grande they crossed over to Mexico. They only stayed there a few weeks, but found a new friend, Little Mex who had been following them the whole time they were in Mexico.

They all went back to Texas and worked as wranglers for various ranchers. They had a language problem, Russell knew some Pawnee and Cheyenne, but was the only one who knew English. He tried to get them to teach him more Pawnee or Cheyenne, but they didn't want to teach him. They told him that some of the ranchers had already told them that they would not hire a bunch of Indians, so they wanted him to teach them the white man's tongue. Little Mex was different, he would spend all day and not say a word, he would just nod to let you know he understood. This group of kids worked as hard as any cowboy.

Back then nobody asked who they were or where they were from, you just didn't ask that kind of question then. All they needed to know is if you could work, and they could, they really got good at breaking horses. One night they were camped in the middle of nowhere, it was so flat they could see for miles. After dark they saw a small light where a cabin was, so the hungry boys picked up and started going that way. After traveling two or three miles the rancher blew his light out and they had no way to figure out where it was until early the next morning when the light came back on.

Another night they were camped just south of Amarillo Texas, when Little Mex set up and said he could smell meat cooking over a fire. Since they were all hungry, they got up and started going toward where the smell was coming from.

The horses they were riding seemed to be as afraid as they were, it seemed like a wide open space, but they could not see any camp fires anywhere even though it was very dark that night. The horses abruptly stopped and would not go any farther. They realized that they were close to the camp fire, so they dismounted and started walking until they saw it. They had found Palo Duro Canyon, far down below they could barely make out the camp fire. Russell had been to this canyon before, but they were afraid to go any farther until daylight.

When morning came they could not see anything except a few Indian ponies grazing on the lush grass in the valley. It took them a while, but they finally found an animal trail leading down into the valley. They were amazed how lush and green everything was, all kinds of trees and grass lined streams everywhere. The animals and some Indians had been using this wonderful canyon as a refuge for years. That is what they found, about one hundred and fifty southern Cheyennes had a camp hidden in the canyon, they had been given permission to hunt for food and decided not to go back. They were mostly families from a reservation in north Oklahoma. They had actually found a buffalo in the canyon and had cooked it over a camp fire the night before, that is what Little Mex had smelled.

The boy cowboys stayed three weeks and were questioned about what they were up to. After hearing about their success in avoiding the Calvary, their new friends asked them to help them get to Mexico without being found. The boys agreed because it made no difference to them which way they went. The route was figured out and they were getting ready to leave, when a scout came running into camp saying that he had seen a large dust cloud coming from the entrance to the canyon that could only be the U.S. Calvary.

Russell's group knew there was no chance for the whole camp to run, so the young boys mounted up and found the animal trail they had come down. Hiding in the brush on the canyon wall they saw the Calvary surround the Indian camp and with just a few shots into the air, they convinced the camp to give up and go home to their reservation. Russell considered the word "RESERVATION" to be a cuss word his whole life, also referring to it as a fenced corral.

After climbing out of the Palo Duro Canyon, they headed north where a rancher saw them and asked if they wanted to work his ranch. He had lost two cowboys and needed help, he would pay them four dollars a month, plus room, board and also some new clothes. They agreed and started working that day. As before, no one asked who they were or where they were from.

1907 - 1909 - COWBOYS

Back to working on the large Texas ranches the opportunity came. Their new boss told them that he wanted them to help take a herd north to Wyoming. Russell and his friends had a chance to work as wranglers on The Old Goodnight or Chisholm Trail, herding 2500 cows. They started in west Texas, through Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska and into western Wyoming. They started in about 1908 and into 1909. At this time, the cattle drive trails were being blocked by homesteaders, or nesters who gave them a lot of trouble. They would block the way or steal cattle when they could, making it hard to follow the old trail. Because of this, they did not follow the old trail, but had to make their own way. They had to plan the way, looking for grass to graze and easy water crossings.

Notice that Russell and his friends were around nine years old when the drive started. This drive included Russell who was one of five run away Indian boys, two from Pawnee two from the Cheyenne camp and one boy they picked up in Mexico that they called "Little Mex". They had been working cattle for Texas ranchers for a while when they heard about this cattle drive and they were ready to roam. Russell wrote his book, "Great American Cowboys" in 1979 and I have wondered if the writers of the John Wayne movie, "Cowboys" used this story as a guide. The movie was filmed in 1972 so it was before the book, but Russell had been telling his life story for years and it may have influenced the movie.

As in the movie, these cowboys carried their side arms. An old cowboy told them as they were sitting around the dying camp fire, "Boys as you go through life you better choose your side well - draw fast - shoot straight and don't shoot any bystanders". When they had reached Cheyenne, they camped along a creek with plenty of grass and the ramrod said that they would lay over for a few days. They didn't have to worry about cattle rustlers, because they were close to town and a couple of cattle rustlers had recently attended a kneektie party there a few weeks earlier.

They had spent months on the trail without a good meal, the knife throwing cook was dirty, old, stingy and grumpy. The old cook went into town and came back with so many groceries the boys didn't know what to think. They thought all he knew how to cook was beans, maybe seasoned with buffalo chip ashes. They were amazaed at what he cooked, the next morning, he woke them up banging on a skillet yelling for them to get up as usual, but, he had a breakfast laid out for a king. Pancakes, syrup, butter, and clean metal plates. Biscuits, grits, scrambled eggs, sausage, bacon, gravy and orange juice. The coffee was hot and the pot had been washed. They all quietly ate their food, afraid to say anything, this might be a dream. That night was even better, things they had never seen before was set before them, he even made cinnamon rolls. He then told his story, he had been a Harvey House cook and lost his job when he broke the rules and fell in love with one of the Harvey Girls. Devistated, he decided to disappear and ended up here. When the drive was over, Russell invited the cook to go home to Pawnee Oklahoma with him. The cook did that spring and spent most of his time in the Pawnee and Cheyenne cantonement on the North Canadian River.

You have to remember that this cattle drive was arranged by a group of Texas ranchers.

They had rented a large ranch in Wyoming and had planned the trip so they would arrive in the fall. The plan was to winter the cattle on the ranch to gain weight for a spring sale. They even had loads of feed sent to help the process. Wyoming is cold in the winter, and most of the older wranglers knew this just would not work and quit after arriving. The Young boys found themselves with very little adult help and were in trouble. The forman sent for help that never came.

I don't think any cowboys lost their lives, but one lost all his fingers and toes when he got stranded in the snow. Russell said that the cattle was supposed to gain weight during the winter, but the only animals that gained weight was the wolves who would take all the longhorns they wanted. When spring came there was less than a thousand cattle left alive from the original 2,500 they started with.

Russell put this poem in his book, "Great American Cowboys". It is about the little Mexican boy they called "Little Mex".

LITTLE MEX

Twass back in 1907 when I first saw this little lad,
For four riding years a better friend I never had.
Five nine year old Indian boys riding laughing and free,
Crossed into Old Mexico to see what they could see.
From El Paso we swam the Rio Grand,
To Ciudad Juarez beautiful Mexico land.

We rode the town over, The pretty sights we found,
We slept at the stock yards on the warm ground.
Some friends we found, Others paid us no mind,
Then we noticed this Little Mex following along behind.
His shave tail little poney could hardly stand alone,
Little Mex says let me go with you for I have no home.

Little Mex the wrangler, He wanted to go so bad,
We let Little Mex tag along although food or money we never had.
As we rode the roundups all across the Texas land,
Little Mex the wrangler made us a dam good hand.
The work was hard and very little pay,
For four years Little Mex was not twenty foot away.

In the four years, Little Mex he never grew an inch,
But oh my goodness how that boy could eat.
And ride, He could ride anything that had four feet,
We herd tell of the biggest cattle drive of all,
Twenty Five hundred going north that fall.
We all six boys we had to get on this drive, We want to go a roaming,
We help drive them cattle through Texas, Kansas, Nebraska to Wyoming.

Many happy times, Many sad adventures we had, Along the Old Chisholm,
But every mile we went, was just another mile from home.
We never had time to get lonely, Not even to lust,
We had to keep them cattle moving as we ate their dam dust.
We had a jolly Irishman as cook along this drive,
He'd make four meals out of one rabbit and it was still alive.
Into his cook pot the wind would blow, First dust then snow,
Oh the beans were raw, and the meat was fat,
Oh my oh, We could'nt eat that.

Some wild Indians one night to steal a steer, To eat they did need,
But in all the shootin and yeelin it caused a stampede.
We all were riding, Like riding for gold,
Doing our best that 2500 to hold.
Little Mex was riding, Riding through the chaparrel,
Leaping a large bush, His horse on Mex he fell.
When we got the cattle settled, Settled every head,
We found Little Mex and found him dead.

Nothing to do but dig him a grave at the setting of the sun,
Little Mex's riding was over, His roping was done.
In silence, Grim silence we covered him o'er,
Little Mex will ride the wild bronco and rope cattle no more.
We turned towards the cooks camp fire, Every man felt alone,
Little Mex the wrangler, He had gone home.
No sound could you hear save the wind as it moaned,
Little Mex the wrangler burried a thousand miles from home.

Russell Sage Carter

Little Mex wasn't the only death on this trail. Russell told about a boy about fifteen years old that showed up along the trail one day wanting a job. He was in ragged clothes and had on boots that were barely held together. The trail boss cut a horse out of the extra horses and wanted to see him ride. He turned out to be a good wrangler, but one day they found him killed when his horse fell on him. They never knew his name, they just called him Joe. Life on the range was a ruff life and these boys lived through it. They would never take their clothes off, they wore them off. You could find a large pile of dirty rags piled high in the feed lots just out of town where wranglers had replaced the old with newly store bought ones.

Russell and his partners, after a long hard winter decided it was time to go home. So they worked their way home, working the small ranches along the way. Russell had been gone for several years and he was going to get a big surprise when he got back to his Pawnee home.

1906 - CARTER FAMILY LEAVING PAWNEE

About the time Oklahoma became a state the Carter family moved on. You can imagine what they thought of Russell being gone so long, they had no idea where he was or even if he was still alive. He told me later that it took him almost a year to track them down when he returned to Pawnee. The old rock house was empty, the doors and windows were gone. It even took him a couple of weeks just to find out that they had left for New Mexico.

Six families from the Pawnee area moved to New Mexico that year. Russell wrote this short poem about the ones who went by wagons.

Twenty one covered wagons wandering slowly through the sand.
No food, no water, no grass, and no wood to burn.
They met some Indians going the other way and were told,
“You are going to starve before you reach Santa Fe”.

Russell always said that his dad had itchy feet until the day he died, he wanted to move on. They had a large auction, sold their farm and loaded every thing they had into an “Immigrant Car” on the railroad. An immigrant car was just a standard box car that you could load up everything including cattle and have it hauled to where you were going. Only one person was allowed to ride in it to take care of the cattle, horses and mules. This didn’t stop Joseph Carter, he hid two of his boys, under a wagon behind his wild mules who didn’t like traveling by rail. They were almost caught two different times, the second time all it took was a gallon of corn whiskey to get the railroad agent to turn the other way. They unloaded when they got to their destination, Fortails New Mexico. They had had hard times, but they did not know what was to come. Some of the old timers said, if I could get enough money, I would leave here today. It only took the Carters three years to save up enough money to leave.

It was Joseph Carters idea to homestead 160 acres himself and have three of the older boys homestead another 160 acres each. The four parcels would join in the middle where each would have their own home, but use one well. This seemed like a great idea, but survival was the only thing that mattered from then on. No garden, no grass, no water until it rained. The cows would follow them around begging for a blade of grass, they even burnt the thorns off cactus so they could feed it to the cows.

Somehow Arthur ended up with a dugout on his section and moved right in. Joseph and his big family rented a tent and unloaded everything on the ground. Before they got the railroad car unloaded, Henry, one of the boys came down with the measles. Soon the whole family had the measles and it was three weeks before they could move into Arthurs dug out. This “cattle ranch” was like the home they had in the Ozarks, the more you owned, the poorer you were.

Soon they built their own home, a half dugout with a second floor on top. Russell showed up and everyone was happy to see him again, in his later years said that New Mexico is a wonderful state with sites that can be seen nowhere else, But his fathers dream didn’t work out.

1909 - PRAIRIE DOG TOWN NEW MEXICO

The Carters moved into Arthurs dug out, the older kids were working in town and the men were gone looking for an established ranch to buy. This left Sarah, Russell and Leona alone for months. New Mexico had hundreds of Prairie Dog Towns and several were near the dugout that they were living in. Since he didn't have much to do, Russell decided that he would check the small animals out. He realized that there was actually seven prairie dog towns surrounding the dugout. He started watching a large Prairie Dog Town that covered about fifty acres. It was easy to hide behind brush that was surrounding it. He later saw that the prairie dogs would clear the area of brush and pile them along the perimeter to make it easier to see predators approaching. There were holes about ten to twenty foot apart with raised rims around the holes that they stood on watching for anything that would threaten them.

This is such an interesting story, the only thing I can do is show you what Russell wrote in his book, "From Pawnee Bill To The Moon".

PRAIRIE DOG TOWN

Some of their peculiar habits and senses few persons would have the patience to ever get close enough to see. I would tie my dog up and spend weeks watching this dog like squirrel. Their six to eight inch hole leads straight down for six to eight foot, before they take off on more or less an even depth, there will be risers every so often leading up two or three foot, this gives them a safe place to go in case any one is foolish enough to try to drown them out, it can not be done we have tried, no matter how much water, fill all their holes and they all could climb up these risers and wait until the water soaked away, when they would come back to the sunshine. Their nests of clean short hay was in this riser, and they stored food up there, They would bite off great piles of this real short gramma grass, leave it lay in the sun until it cured just to suite them then carry great mouthfulls to their storage rooms. And of course their babies were born in the nests in the risers.

This most efficient under ground home or city, was a labrinthine subterranean arrangement beyond your wildest imagination. All their holes are connected together down here, with many dead end tunnels leading off and up, the dogs know these are dead end, but badger digging after them might work hours on a dead end hole while the dogs would go back out and play. The perfectly shaped and sloped solid mounds around their entrance, is not as many think-to keep water out, when it comes a big rain, Oh no, this by no means was the reason, these mounds were their observation towers, where they stand on their hind legs balancing themselves with their stout stubby tail, while looking for predators. Since the prairie dog lived in great numbers on the

prairie where there is no water near, some people think they actually dig to water, but this is not true. Our neighbor C C Price had a well drilled two hundred foot deep in the center of a prairie dog town and struck no water. They get their water from the vegetation, they cultivate or take care of the thistle type weed and the loco weed for this very purpose. I would see them early mornings stand on their hind legs and suck moisture from these leaves, careful not to damage the plant. They will not eat these plants, but save them and come back next morning for another drink.

When first I began going to their town they were afraid of me, and did much scolding and yapping at me, but persistence finally paid off. I started by gathering big tumble weeds, then would crawl into their town and fasten the weed so it would not blow away, continuing this soon I had a nice blind, which I was hid and shaded in, and room to turn as I observed this interesting little creature, who is almost extinct now.

For weeks I spent most all of the daylight hours in my blind, observing the peculiar and lively antics of this intelligent little animal. The prairie dog has been so called, from since the white man first saw them, Mostly due to their bark. A marmont like creature eight to twelve inches in body length, stocky with stout short legs and tail. Their bark is the only thing about them which can be compared to a dog. They are more like squirrels in every way except nothing to climb out here, are a clean little fat rascal, and are real good eating. Necessity makes for the characteristic of the animal. If squirrels suddenly found themselves out on the bald prairie of New Mexico, they would perhaps wear off part of their long tails, learn to dig, eat grass and plants, and make homes in the ground for self preservation, as the prairie dog has done.

The holes become much smaller than they are near the entrance. At numerous places in their subterrian tunnels it will be just large enough for them to squeeze through. This is for safety, if another animal is after them it will slow him down, a badger for instance will have to enlarge the hole as he goes through, thereby giving the prairie dog time to move on, hide or come up at one of the many exits and move back into the self same hole, behind the tired working badger. Or they will dig and tramp the hole shut in places. After a while Mr Badger will become tired and move on to try and find his supper elsewhere.

The prairie dog has some very mysterious senses all his own, nature gave them to him, and he could not change them if he wanted to. In one hole mind you I saw besides the prairie-dogs, a family of four prairie owls, a pair of rattle snakes, three foot long, a mother skunk with her four babies, and a couple of cotton tail rabbits, all coming going from this one hole. No friction or fuss each would move out of the others way. The young prairie dogs will wrestle each other and roll over the snakes as though it was not there. These owls about eight to ten inches tall will stand on top of the mounds for hours on end, motionless except their head which will roll almost a complete circle, if there is a post or shrub near they will fly to it and sit motionless until they see a fieldmouse or small lizzard to pounce on, they require much less food than the more ambitious hawks, they exercise less. My dog has caught them, when they have babies they fly over and try to run the dog off, old colie would jump up and grab them. The rabbits will be coming and going, mother skunk will lead her brood across the prairie in search of insects and mice, coming back through the crowd at night.

The prairie dog keeps a space of fifty yards or more all around their town cleared of all tall weeds and brush. This so they can see from the top of their observation tower mounds any and all intruders who might venture upon their domain, and when this did happen, they had outer guards posted, who were always on the alert. If these saw danger they would run or it's more of a lope to the nearest mound, and standing on their hind legs braced by their stubby tails, their stout little lungs would give off with there danger bark. A loud Chek up a chek up a chek up, then all at once, the prarie chorus begins, from five to fifteen dogs standing upright on each of the hundreds of mounds scattered over a hundred acres, all are giving off at their utmost this Chek up Chek up chek up. And all this happened before the centry completed his third Chek up. This was their danger signal only, not their panic signal, which is more of a screech or painful squeel, somewhat like a sirene. I was laying in my blind one day, gazing up at the blue sky, when I heard the panic warning.

I had observed nothing unusual or moving in the sky, but one guard saw the tiny speck, as this bald eagle dived toward them, trying for a dog that was farther away from his hole, but his mighty dive was wasted, as many hawks had tried the same thing, the eagle leveled off forty foot above the groung and went elsewhere to find a meal, he was well over a hundred mile from his lair in the Sange De Cristo mountains. The prairie dogs eyesight is much better than ours for objects in great distance, but up real close they can hardly see at all.

The panic signal, you only hear it once, there is no time for a second. The guard who gives the signal works so hard screeching so loud, that he is out of wind and quiet often he is the last one into his hole, by the time his screech was over every one of over a thousand dogs were in their hole. There was no time or desire to stand up and bark, as they well knew that some one was after them, they had four legs and they used them, knocking each other over as they come, scampering over their big smooth mounds and down into the straight down hole, that is why they constructed it that way. They are more afraid of predators from the air than from the ground, they come much quicker from the air, but their little round eyes are able to see them comin from great distance, but the law of averages catches up with them, and the hawk gets one quiet often. When they are building new towns, all are busy and they have not had time to clear off all weeds and brush, it is then that the ground predator lives fat and sassy.

They also know there is safety in numbers, they are not aggressive, but can and do put up quiet a fight, when necessary, they know to keep all weeds shrubs and even you wonder how cactus cut and their boundry line, all piled drug outside up so they will not blow back, it is so they can see any approach of a predator any where in their guard territory. I have watched as a coyote would crawl slowly on his belly across this guard strip. But they seldom get half way, the guard will give the warning, but the dogs would take their time going to their hole, but a hawk in the sky, that called for speed.

If a sentry allows an enemy to enter the camp without warning his buddies. OH MY, he is in trouble, after the intruder had left, whether he had killed a dog or not. When the prairie dogs again came to the surface, the guilty guard would be roughly chased back to the scene of the crime, with much of their loud chek ups and snapping, growling and a rough bumping around. This is a sight to see, you almost feel sorry for him before they get through with him, but I bet he dosent do it again.

The prairie dog is a good farmer, using the methods used by the Aztec Indians used in Old Mexico thousands of years before -- that is pull out all unwanted or unused vegetation in their territory, carefully scraping and tamping the dirt which is disturbed back in place, tamping it down so the wind will not blow the top soil away. Leaving only the nutritious feeding grasses, and the juicy thistle which supplies their water requirements. He then carries or drags all loose plants and weeds or any which blow in, all the way off their observation circle, where it is piled neat piles and tramped down so the wind will not blow it back again. They may have to cut a big weed to pieces or a dozen get holt and drag. This nice cleared circle around their town also serves as a fire safety zone. The wild prairie fires were a deadly hazard to the homesteader, the wagon trains and the cowboys and ranchers. Seldom if ever a predatory enemy remain permanently or for any great length of time in a prairie dog town, even though it would be a supermarket and all for free. He would be treated much worse than you would treat an uninvited and non paying guest in your home, they would gang up, and at least threaten and abuse him until they would leave.

In the lifestyle of all animals, they kill only what they need to eat. Otherwise they will lay down and sleep beside each other, or if a fire, flood or other danger comes along they will all migrate in a bunch as a family. So a beast of prey would be ashamed to just live with the prairie dogs, It would not be sportsmanship.

After any excitement or danger when they have all gone into their holes. By watching close you may see a nose protude just above the mound, then an eye, soon a body which will stand upright on top the mound and give the all clear signal. That is- if it is all clear, if not back he goes, and you are liable not to have even got a glimps of him. If the all clear signal is given, it will only be seconds until he will be joined by the entire family of hundreds, and begin their playful antics all standing up on hind legs, holding out their forepaws not unlike a sleep walker, as they throw back their heads and loudly vent their joy. Which is a jangled prolonged version of their chek ups. They get so loud and happy, they vigorously scream their joy they begin bouncing up and down, many will become unbalanced and fall over backwards.

The truth is they seem to be constantly playing só long as they are awake. They play and tug at each other, climbing over each other, using their short tails to balance themselves. The most unusual trick of all is, most all the time you can see several running across their territory as a team, two together, shoulder to shoulder, as though they were pulling a prairie schooner. These two will be the same age and size perfect mates.

The mound covered towns and the additions to it are started by what you might call - families or tribes. Usually they are built at the edge of or near the home town. Not always though, as they, if the need exists may go quiet some distance to start a new town in some new good grass land.

When the young become about one year old, the more aggressive males and females will begin to congregate and think about moving, at least a short distance to the edge of the town and start a new community. This will be their territory, their home, to cherish also to defend. They are not welcome by mother any more, as she is expecting again. Neither are they welcome by

Father, as he sees in the males a rival. There is no rush, no fuss, and no hurry or force, like we did the Indians. Just a natural happening, the gang bunch or family tribe, will most all go to their new territory in a bunch of a morning, and work all day, coming home at night for some time, until they get most of their holes and tunnels done. At first they dig down their distance, then start the laterals, not wasting one paw full of dirt as they start the mounds packing the dirt down as they go. It will take weeks of hard angorous work, you see they work so hard they neglect to watch for predators, and there may be big weeds and tall greenery to be moved before they can see far enough to see a coyote coming in, they have to start weeding and clearing out all unwanted grasses. So they are a mighty busy bunch, they do come back home and are welcome, while they are building their new homes. When they finally get all or near done, they will move in to stay, and all the time they have been establishing their scent barrier or boundry line, and there may have been a third of them or more caught by predators during the building. It is a hard job indeed for the little rascals, they have not had much time to play for these weeks.

The prairie dogs are always in rich ground, the homesteaders knew this and would gladly welcome a prairie dog town on ther future home. But after he lives there he may resent the prairie dog and will poison them out, which is easy done, they are trusting little souls and will eat poison corn.

After their home is established they are careful not to over graze it, that is another reason for the young to start new additions and new towns. They will even ration themselves and go hungry during drought to conserve their food supply. They are concerned about winter, as they cut the short grass let it cure a few hours then carry to their tunnels. They never seem to kill out all the grass even in the heart of their towns.

The towns are divided into many sub divisions or colonies of over a dozen mounds per colony or, yes these are families. Now here is where the invisible, though real boundry line is, and they have more trouble over this scent line than anything else, no one just no one must cross this scent boundry, as it is carefully guarded, by one and all just as soon as they reach the age of accountability. They will tolerate suckling babies but they are not cared for so soon hunt their own mama, each family has a leader or Papa, who is established by the peck method, and he surely does have to work hard. If an adult crosses for any reason, or no reason, they are met usually by Papa who you remember can see a hawk at great distance, but up close he is near sighted as the dickens, since all dogs do look exactly alike, you ask how can he tell that this dog is a trespasser; They do have a keen smell, as he approaches the intruder he is smelling, usually with bared teeth, if the scent is alien, then a few snaps of the teath, a growl and a bump is sufficient to send the intruder scurring back across the border, even tho they had encroached as little as a few feet.

If an adult prairie dog sees another adult on their territory whom they think is a trespasser, after the teeth baring and snapping ritual, find the supposed stranger has its own scent and is not a stranger but one of its own, then they have their own idea of making up, and you should see this. They rub noses and perform an interesting ritual like play, similar to what goes on all day long all over the town. The male or the more aggressive female will push the other over on their back, fall on them and roll over a time ot two, after much nuzzeling, cuddling and loving, they will both rise to their hind feet hugging each other and end up trotting off with their bodies rub-

bing each other, they continue this position for several minutes, as they trot across and all around their domain. They look just like a mated team of horses hooked together pulling an imaginary wagon all over the home site.

Scenes like this are going on all the time all over the town, for all kind of reasons. I think the main reason is their love for each other and they show it more than any other animals, and or humans.

They really are loving little creatures, Reminds me of sex education in the old days - Pa would come into the kitchen on a cold day with an arm load of wood. Ma would be stooped over placing a pan of biscuits in the oven and Pa would slap her on her but and she would like it. Well I said - that is for me.

Their unwritten scheme, or laws, or survival rules, or better called their mysterious senses. To us it is mysterious. But to them and for them it works real well.

When starting this new family community every one works hard, for these little fellows it takes an enormous amount of work, digging and dragging out dirt from the many hundred feet of holes, wherein all four wide stout feet, tail and nose are used. After a shower they rework the mounds, they pat the dirt down hard with their noses and front feet. They rare up and strike the damp dirt just like young sheep or calf. They have to clear the land too.

These senses given to them by nature, shows in so many ways, when they are about a year old, they are much like your son was at seventeen, they know more than you do, and want to sow their wild oats. They see and feel attraction for the opposite sex. So, as it becomes crowded around home, there will be many pairs who will be anxious to start this new home, and I feel sure they mate for life.

I mentioned their scent boundries, they seem to all agree as to where these shall be, and start scenting them the first day, they will run all the way out to them each time they have to urinate. They are not quiet as religious about their bowel movement, but they will fresh scent the boundry lines each day. My hunting and stock dogs were the same way as the prairie dogs in this respect, always when we would establish camp after traveling all day, my dogs would at once make big circle around his camp ground turning up and leaving his urine scent or weed around HIS boundry line, on every big bush that was his warning that any intruder who crossed that line could expect to deal with HIM. These boundry lines will remain the same forever, the dogs will not change them at all. Oh yes the very young are allowed to cross over in the neighbors yard, but when the little boogers get hungry don't worry they will find mother, Usually before dark, or he will get an assist from an aunt or even an uncle.

There is always one of the larger males who is leader of each subdivision, you wonder how he becomes boss, this again is planned by natural senses. From babes on you will notice the more aggressiveness to adult life, in work and play, isn't it called the pecking instinct. Or perhaps this male is just smarter, I do know they work much harder, this big boss of the dozen or more families in each division, he will travel several miles each day just policing the boundry of his domain, keeping every one in their proper place, etc.

He has to fight quite often to hold his important position, And of course it is the same with Me and Tom Ellis, somebody is always trying to take our place.

The prairie dog makes a lovable pet, if you get him when he is young and devote some time to his attention, I had two small steel traps, I wrapped the jaws with soft cloth and set them in holes which I observed young dogs coming and going, at first I would find the traps thrown, but no dog in them, you see the older ones would just pull their foot out. This must of happened a dozen times, but I did not want an old cranky Prairie dog for a pet I wanted one or two of the little babies and I could not dig them out, so this was my only chance. And it finally paid off, when I found two of the little rascals in the light weight traps, with the jaws wrapped it did not hurt their little legs. Then I had the job of raising them as I caught two more from a different hole the next morning. Lucky we had fresh milk, them with a medicine dropper and a spoon, but they grew fast and friendly, I let them have the run of the house until Ma got tired of them all four grabbing her bare legs and rolling all over her feet.

I got Dads post hole digger and went to work, in the corner right by the door of our half dugout. Leona had to help me as the hole got eight foot deep we quit. I worked and put a fine mesh woven wire around the hole, burying it all around a few inches. I dug the hole on a slope and put some nice fresh cut hay in it, then we put the little boogers in the hole, I was terrible worried the first night, I got up several times went out and talk to them, but the next morning they were there and happy.

They never once tried to get out, the dogs slept right near. So I guess they were afraid if they got out the dogs would get them, so they rather just stay in their pen and bark at the dogs, what ever Ma would give me I fed them. I would cut green grass and They lived and had babies three litters. I gave every boy in the school a pet Prairie dog. Some of their Mothers made them take them to a town and turn them loose. While others kept them.

We were living at Bolivar Missouri in the dry year 1934, Corkey was the baby and Mother Sis wanted to take him to Colorado to show him off. So we drove out to Ordway to Bryans ranch, while there I sat traps and caught three Prairie dogs, they were not young by any means. That old cranky male dog could and did grow teeth faster than Carter grow oats, I would cut his teeth off and by the time I got the last tooth cut off I would have to start cutting the first one again. I got tired of cutting Prairie dog teeth, and being bit by them, they never got tame. So, one day I took the little boogers and turned them loose in a pasture.

I am afraid that was a mistake, I looked but never saw them any more I suppose that a fox or coyote got them, or perhaps worse, a hunter. All of us should be conservationist. If you are a hunter it is all the more important that we be conservation minded. Try to respect and preserve not destroy.

One morning as I was crawling into the tunnel like entrance to my weed blind when just inches in front of my nose I saw those two rattle snakes. They were not coiled and made no effort to strike at me. They had their head up about four inches, just looking at me with that forked tongue licking in and out at me. Sometimes one can react instantly and sometimes you can't, I

just froze for a few seconds, as I was laying flat on my belly. I finally crawled backward out of there fast as I could, and didn't stop until got home. I knew I dassent tell Ma about this or she might not let me go back any more, and I was just beginning to know my Prairie Dogs. After a couple of days I got up enough courage to go back, and of course the snakes were gone, I do not think they would have bothered me if I had just laid still and scolded them like the dogs do and they would have left me to my weed house alone. They might have took up residence in the weed blind except, when I did not come back for a few days the dogs decided to move those weeds out of their home, they did not by any means get them all they carried and drug out but they sure thinned it out. I could see through it much eaiser and after a couple days the dogs paid me no mind. Rattle snakes are defensive fighters only they seldom if ever strike without rattling, and this only if their life is in imminent danger.

Another word about the scent boundries around the settlements. The older females also help police them, I saw a female near the border one day, when another large female from the south family made a run at her with bared teeth snarling and scolding, but the first female thinking she was in the right wouldn't run but rather she turned her buttocs with her tail up exposing her anal, and she seemed to say, Smell. This Is Me, I belong here. The other one did the same thing, this would go on and on as they argued over who belonged where, untill one would bite the others buttocs. Evidently they were a little dumb, or the scent barrier was a little weak at this point, some one had neglected to use it that day;

Finally, after much yakking they would each go their own way. During this, heated disgussion there had gathered quiet an audience around them who also dispersed running off two together as teams about their buisness making a living.

Russell Sage Carter

I have talked to several old timers that said some of these remote area's would have Prarie Dog Towns for miles around. They would be yelling and chattering so loud you could not hear the persom next to you. As the settlers moved in they did anything they could do to get rid of them as Russell said. We have visited several National Parks that is protecting these funny little animals and we always stop and watch for a while. I aways remember Russell Sage Carter and his stories when I see them.

1910 - MOVE FROM NEW MEXICO

The Carter family had been having a real hard time in New Mexico. Most of their neighbors had already gave up and moved due to the harsh environment. Joseph Carter was almost sixty now, the family would have to gather all they had and try again somewhere else. There was no use trying to have an auction sale like they did in Pawnee because the families that had not already left didn't have any money to spend. What they didn't give away, they just left behind.

They loaded up two Springfield wagons and their Hack with all they could get on them and headed out on a new adventure. That morning they had rounded up all their livestock that they had left, fourteen head of cattle, six ponies, and four mule colts. Their dad told the children not to look back because it was bad luck, Russell admitted that he took one last look through tears. They were leaving all their friends and would never see them again. The family did not know that it would be twenty one months before they would have the pleasure of sleeping in a house again.

They were headed back to the east, in a couple of weeks they hit their first goal, "The Texas Gate", they heard that someone had put a fence at the Texas border and there it was, it even had a gate across the old worn out road. About a month later they opened another gate and pulled into the Kings Ranch. It took them five days to cross this vast cattle empire where they opened another gate going east. They did go a little out of their way to stop at a village called Muleshoe Texas to make some repairs on the wagons. It was hard and dangerous, they had to swim the stock and wagons across the rivers and streams. They even crossed the Palo Duro Canyon, wagons and all. If you know anything about Palo Duro Canyon, you know how hard it must have been. The only canyon bigger than this in the United States is the Grand Canyon. At that time there was no roads and they had to let the wagons down with ropes and then pull them back up on the other side. Someone told Joseph that they would save several days of travel time if they crossed the canyon, but Russell would have known how hard it would be. I think he was eager to see this big cayon again.

What took twenty two months to go from New Mexico to Oklahoma was because they had nothing, they would stop and work for small farms and ranches to work and make a living while on the road. They even planted crops and gardens for people along the way. They camped outside of Oklahoma City for a while and saw the big sites in that big city. It was fall when they drove through Claremore Oklahoma, a man stopped them and asked if they wanted to help shuck corn, they were glad to get the work. They wintered in Alva Oklahoma, all the boys and men helped dig ditches for the new sewer system, Russell was water boy. After that they went to Eu-fala, then on to Okmulgee where they bought a farm. This was probably the year 1910.

This was now their own farm again, they all worked hard planting a big crop of corn, sorghum, and cotton and they just had another crop failure. But, they had a house to live in and a chance to go to school again, it was only a one and one half mile walk. They were happy again, they were able to go to a regular church again. When they were living in the wagon Joseph Carter always made sure that they had some sort of church service, even if it was only for their family. After several crop failures, it was a dicouraging situation, Joseph began to have itching feet again.

1912 - SEILING OKLAHOMA

The government put up posters in the Post Office and in the newspapers telling about land that had been reclaimed in western Oklahoma. Really I think it was land that the government took back from the Indians. There was about one hundred tracts that was going to be auctioned off to the highest bidder. Joseph went west with all the money he had stuffed in a home made money belt to buy a new farm. When he got there he decided that he didn't like the looks of any of the land for sale.

As usual, Joseph seemed to feel more at home among the Indians and camped near a town called Seiling at a large Cheyenne camp. He visited with Chief Standing Rock, who was in charge and told him his story about needing a farm. After some negotiating, Chief Standing Rock rented the Carters a section of land with a cedar log cabin and good fences, it even had a well on the property. It was just across the road from the cheyenne camp.

The Cheyenne Camp had around two hundred tents and three small cabins. They didn't have water so they got all the water they needed from the Carter family well. Joseph had not forgotten their language and was soon called the "De Odie Man", just like the Pawnee called him. Russell tried to go to the white man's school again, but it just didn't work out, he went to the Indian school where he was welcome. His pass time was playing stick ball, foot racing, horse racing and swimming. The North Canadian River ran just behind their barn lot, the Carters had built a nice new barn. They accumulated a large herd of cattle and planted a large crop to feed them.

Soon there was a huge vegetable garden that included a half acre of peanuts, that the jackrabbits really liked, they came in by the dozens. The family told two young boys, High Cloud and Black Hawk that they would pay them a nickel for each jackrabbit they killed. Each evening they each brought a jackrabbit to Joseph and wanted their nickle.. When High Clouds father, Big Cloud, came over to visit one day, Joseph asked why they only killed one Jackrabbit each day, Big Cloud explained that each person can only eat one at a time, so why kill more.

In the 1930's the Workers Project, or WPA hired boys from the Ozarks to plant trees in Oklahoma. Earl Blanset who later became a well known auctioneer and preacher was among them. They soon found out that the Jackrabbits were eating all the young trees. They gave Earl a twenty two rifle and all the ammunition he wanted, his job was to kill as many jackrabbits he could each day. He told me that he killed thousands of them.

1912 - CHIEF STANDING ROCK

Joseph Carter knew the Cheyenne language well and became real close friends with Chief Standing Rock. Since the Chief did not know english very well, he went to the Carter home a lot to get him to translate for him. He was there for anyone in the camp that needed his help.

One day, a new man by the name of Melton, who had just moved into the area, decided that he would build an ice house. After he built it, he hired several men to help him cut and haul ice from the North Canadian River which was about eight inches thick at the time. When Chief Standing Rock saw four wagons and several men on his land, he went to find out what they were doing. It would have been fine if they had asked the Chief or the Carters for permission, but they came with no notice as to what they were doing. He did not get a good reception when he tried talking to the men who did not know his language and he did not know theres. As far as he knew, this was just another bunch of white men trying to steal his land.

The Chief went home and got his rifle and started shootong at the group of men. they took off as fast as they could, but not before Mr. Melton got hit in the arm by a bullet. The group took him streight to the doctor and after he was patched up he wwent to the shefiff and filed a complaint against Chief Standing Rock. The sheriff at that time was a young man, from back east and he had no idea what really happened, and was ignorant of the Indians way of life, but off he went in his buggy to arrest the Chief.

The sheriff went streight to the Carter home to get Joseph to interpet, but he was not home. Sarah Carter begged the Sheriff to wait for Joseph and not to try to arrest Standing Rock because he would not even know what you are doing, but he would not listen to her. He left and started walking to the camp that was just across the road. About half way there, he met the Chief who was on his way to the Carters to get a bucket of water. The sheriff harshly told the Chief that he was there to arrest him and couldn't get him to understand why, it seemed to Sarah that he did not try very hard to explain. The Chief got tied of this and said that he wanted to go on over to the "Odie Man" and tried to tell him about the men who were on his land.

Sarah and Russell were the only ones home and could not get either one to understand that they needed to wait for Joseph to get home. So this is when the Sheriff started getting rough with the old Chief and grabbed him by the arm. He had never let a white man treat him like this before and he was not going to let this young ignorant Sheriff do it now, so the fight began. After the Chief knocked the Sheriff down, he decided that he would run into the Carters home and borrow the Carters shotgun. The Sheriff pulled his 45 Colt and started shooting, the first shot missed, but the second one hit him right in the back between the shoulders, he was in the doorway and fell into the house. Mrs. Carter pulled him to the side and shut the door. As Sarah and Russell was dragging him to her bed, another bullet came through the door. The Sheriff kicked the door in just in time to see old Chief Standing Rock die in Sarah's arms sitting on her bed.

By the time Joseph Carter came home he came across the scene of a full yard of Indians upset over what had just happened. When he was told about the incident, he was just as mad as everyone else. It was impossible to understand why the Sheriff would do such a thing and to make it worse, he shot him in the back.

The Sheriff made another mistake, he went to Seiling and brought back the undertaker in his black hearse being pulled by two black horses, to take the body to town. He was asking for trouble and he got it, he was met with knives, axes and guns, they would have taken care of him right there if Joseph had not talked them out of it. Russell said that his dad was able to hold them back long enough to let the hearse turn around and head out, faster than he had ever seen a hearse go.

The Cheyennes were very upset with first killing their Chief, shooting him in the back and then trying to steal his body. This called for a Pow Wow, the younger boys were sent out to bring in as many horses that they could, while the older generation decided what to do. Within an hour they had over 500 well armed Cheyenne, led by Russell Talbull, ready to raid the little town of Seiling and wipe them out if necessary, most were riding their best Indian ponies, but some were in hacks and wagons. Joseph Carter, Bill Kyle and Dell Firebaugh, all who rented Indian land, went with them. Joseph Carter and the other two men, got permission from their leader, Russell Talbull, to go into town ahead of them and request whatever the Indians wanted. They were so mad that they didn't really know what they wanted. They ended up making several unreasonable requests, including that they turn the Sheriff over to them to be punished.

The three men told the Sheriff and the court judge that they were going to have to give them something of their town was going to be massacred, at least make an offer. After several offers and refusals, Russell Talbull and his army, accepted payment to leave the town alone. The town sent out a team of horses pulling a hack with a coffin in it, a hundred silver dollars and four saddle horses. The Indians reluctantly took their payment and went back home. The town was relieved at the results, but the young Sheriff was no longer welcome and left the very next day.

The Cheyenne tribe put their Chief in the pretty coffin and buried him in the middle of his farm. They had a regular religious service, the Carter family helped build a rock fence around his grave. They buried his knife, gun and saddle with him. The Carter girls planted flowers and took care of them through the next summer. The people would come by and leave jewelry and other items at his grave. This whole event ended a lot better than it could have. The town of Seiling Oklahoma came very close to being wiped out by the Cheyenne and it would have started a series of disputes that would have devastated their way of life.

I don't know if this event had anything to do with it, but soon, the Carters were off to a new home back in the state of Missouri. They would be close to relatives who lived in the area.

I spent a day in the Oklahoma Historical Society and was not able to find any mention of this event. Maybe I can find something later and include it.

1913 - HALFWAY MISSOURI

Again the family was ready to move, Joseph went to visit his brother, Toll, in Springfield Missouri and before he left, he was the owner of a two hundred and eighty acre farm near Halfway Missouri. They were living on rented land in Oklahoma and Joseph wanted to own his own land, so they had another farm and cattle sale, rented another immigrant car on the railroad and loaded up. The next thing Russell knew, he was living in a strange area away from his Indian friends. He had spent his whole life living among one tribe or another, this was hard on him.

Brush farming was new to Russell and hard work. He spent months cutting young tree sprouts, just to see them come back up so he would have to do it again. When he wasn't cutting sprouts, he was picking rocks. He said, "After three years of picking and hauling rocks off one forty acres, we had the largest rock pile any Indian ever saw and very little white men." The best thing was school, he went to school at Concord School and met his future wife, Clara Leota Curl. Several years later, April 1st, 1920 they got married.

The boys not only worked the family farm, they worked for the neighbours. Anything, fixing fence, cutting fire wood, plow the fields, planting corn and yes, cutting sprouts. They got fifty cents a day, lunch and water, all for a ten hour day.

One of Russell's brothers went to Colorado to work on the Cudahy Ranch east of Pueblo. He was operating one of two steam engines that did plowing by the cable method. They would set an engine up on each side of a field, one would pull the plow across one way and then the other would pull, plowing the other way.

So after hearing about his success, the Carters were off again, putting all their things in another Immigrant train car, they were headed for Ordway Colorado.

1915 - ORDWAY COLORADO

When they moved to Ordway Colorado, Russell had no time for school, he went right to work. His father had built hay racks on the sides of their wagon, so Russell could hall hay and alfalfa, he had to help pitch hay and then haul it to where it needed to go.

Joseph bought four more large mules and another wagon, this way his 19 year old son, Bryan and 16 year old Russell could both haul loads. On Decoration day 1916, Bryan and Russell outfitted their wagons with their best mules and headed for the wheat harvest fields of Kansas, 250 miles away. This was hard and hot work, for three dollars a ten hour day and another two dollars for each team of mules. After work they had to take care of their mules and make sure they were ready for the next day.

Apparently they followed the harvest all over Kansas and even worked around Dodge City. When the threshing was over they hauled wheat to Dodge, Minneola and Bucklin. They worked in town some at the grainery, shoveling grain into bins or the grainery as it came in. After the harvest was over Bryan decided that he had enough and sold his team and wagon, harnesses and all. He left and went his own way, leaving Russell alone. He did have his 22 rifle and his dog, but alone. He headed for home in Ordway Colorado.

When he got home, his sister, Leona and her husband, Orrie Cosper, had moved in with them and had a new baby girl named Margaret. Before Russell could hardly say hi, his dad and Orrie loaded up his mules and wagon, going to northern Colorado where the government had just opened up more land for homesteading. Again none of the land was worth farming, so Joseph found a ranch near Hugo that he could rent. This time he told Russell he could do what he wanted to do, go with him or go with his sister and Orrie to Fort Collins and work in the Sugar factory. Russell decided it was time for him to go on his own, he had to lie and say he was 18, but got a job working at the sugar factory. He worked there all winter and sent most of his money to his family so his dad could have another crop failure.

When in Kansas, he bought a new Harley Davidson motorcycle and even raced in overland races, but eventually wrecked it and was not able to get it fixed. Working at the sugar mill, he decided that a motorcycle was a good way to get to work, so he bought another Harley. It was fine during the warm months, but the plant didn't close until early spring so the weather got pretty rough for a motorcycle. One late evening while ice was on the road, he came upon a railroad crossing when a train was coming and all he could do was roll over on his side and he just kept sliding toward the train. He was sliding alright, sliding on his face until he hit a post beside the tracks. Next thing he knew he was in the Sugar Mill hospital office, the doctor was trimming the loose skin off his face. The motorcycle didn't do as good, the train drug it for several hundred feet before it stopped.

1916 - HUGO COLORADO

When the sugar mill closed, he bought another motorcycle and went to help his dad farm again, this time at Hugo Colorado. His parents did not like motorcycles, so they convinced Russell to sell his and buy a horse. Some time later, his new horse died from eating some poison weed. A new age was coming, his brother was operating a steam engine, so Russell decided to get the training he needed to operate machinery. He heard about the Sweeney Auto Aviation and Tractor School, based in Kansas City, Missouri, so he contacted them and was invited to visit and see if he would be interested in going to school there. He was off on his next adventure.

1917 - EMMETT KELLY

In 1917, Russell Sage Carter decided that he wanted to learn a trade. He applied to enroll at the Sweeney Auto Aviation and Tractor School, based in Kansas City, Missouri. This lanky cowboy, who grew up on an Indian Reservation in Oklahoma, and had followed his father on to New Mexico, rolled in on a train in Kansas City. He was met at the brand new Union Train Station by a representative of the large company. They just walked across the street to the ten story building built by Emory J. Johnson for over a million dollars.

He was escorted through the whole building, floor by floor, which included dormitories and then they went to the large tractor training school, training field. This was where the huge United States Post Office now stands. Russell was well impressed and immediately paid his admission fee. He was now going to be trained in how to operate large machinery. You have to realize that at this time most roads were still being built using picks, shovels, and mules.

Russell was not impressed with the dorm rooms, he decided that he could find something within walking distance in downtown Kansas City. He did find a Room and Boarding House a block away on Wyandott Street, the neatly lettered sign said, NUTTERS BOARDING HOUSE. A room was available, but he would have to share it with the man who painted that neat looking sign, Emmett Kelly. Yes, THE Emmet Kelley. Emmet Kelly was just a year older than him and they became very good friends. At this time, Kelly was just a struggling young artist who was always needing money. He had moved to Kansas City from his parents home in Houston, Missouri to try to get a good job as an artist. Russell said that he ["...played with Emmet for the next year and a half."](#) In less than an hour Russell learned more about the circus, clowns, acrobats and the chautauqua circuit than he had ever thought about. Emmet's goal was to "join the Circus" as a Chalk Talker and Acrobat. The little room walls were covered with Emmet's pictures, drawings and Chalk Talk characters.

Chalk Talk illustrations were an entertaining way of drawing while entertaining an audience. He was practicing this art any time he could. He would ask someone to give him three or

four numbers and then he would use the numbers to form them into a likeness of that person.

Emmit held a variety of jobs, and had trained to be a cartoonist. He finally got a job as a cartoonist at an add agency, but still had to find odd jobs to survive. A job that he loved was to paint Kewpie Dolls, the company put up with him putting cross eyes and funny expressions on their small faces, they considered him one of their best painters. His nickname was “Artistic Kelly”.

When Emmit saw that the SELLS FLOTO CIRCUS was coming to town, he already knew all about them and had to go, but as usual, he was broke. At that time he was working for the Sunshine Cracker factory for a small salary and was behind two weeks on his room and board. Russell said that if he could take off, he would pay his way. No problem, they both called in sick. It was the first circus that either one of them had ever seen. Through the whole show all Emmit would say was “I CAN DO THAT” and “I CAN DO THAT” and “I CAN DO THAT”. Russell noticed that Emmit didn’t even seem to notice the circus animals. He closely watched all the clowns and the acrobats in the small circus. They stayed up almost all night talking about their adventure. Their bed had an old heavy iron bedstead and Emmit climbed all over that bed all night long, what a night they had. This went on every night until the owner came barging in wanting to know what was going on in that room. Russell told her that they were just trying to kill the bed bugs, they did have a bed bug problem, but it didn’t work, they were told to do their acrobatic playing somewhere else. They moved their “Training” out to a public park where they were ran out at midnight by the police. They just waited a few minutes and went right back to the playground equipment. Soon, the only reason the police stopped was to watch the show.



Emmit Kelly got a part time job drawing cartoons for the local newspaper and while doing this he created the cartoon character, “Weary Willie”, yes for years all he was, was a cartoon character. When the BARNUM AND BAILEY AND RINGLING BROTHERS CIRCUS came to town, Emmit had to go by himself, and again all he could talk about was the clowns and acrobats. He eventually found his dream job acting as the clown Weary Willie, he never was able to go on the high wire as a main act. Since he was such a good artist, he painted a lot of the circus canvas signs that the circus was famous for.

Many years later Emmit Kelly was at the Greene County Fair and Russell Carter wanted to visit his old friend, but the crowds wanting to see him was so big that he just gave up. He had his memory of his friend that he had so much fun with in Kansas City.

1918 - DROVE FOR OSAGE CHIEF

Russell told about how rich the Osage Tribe became. Like other tribes they were being moved by the government several times, the Osage decided that they would hire an attorney to protect their rights and it worked out. Their attorney convinced the government to let the Osage keep the mineral rights on some of the land that they gave up. When oil started being discovered on Indian land, the Osage held mineral rights on a lot of it and became rich.

One of the Chief's that Russell talked about, bought the biggest most expensive car he could buy and wrecked it the first week he had it. He bought another car and hired Russell to drive it for him while he learned to drive. Apparently this was a wild adventure and Russell ended up with one of the chief's old cars when they parted ways.

1919 - HOMESTEAD ROCKY MOUNTAINS NEAR LEADVILLE COLORADO

Russell had rented a farm thirty five miles east of Colorado Springs and started farming on his own. Among other things he was raising turkeys and chickens, he even had incubators to hatch the eggs. I am not sure, but I think Clara Leota Curl came to Colorado to help him on the farm.

Russell, like his father seemed to always be looking for new opportunities. It seems like he loved the solitude of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, so when the chance to homestead along a mountainside near Leadville Colorado came, he packed up his 1916 Model T truck and went on his next adventure. He had to establish residence on the land in order to hold his homestead, so winter or not, it was December, he drove his truck, loaded with supplies, up to his 8500 foot altitude and built a lean too shelter between two tree's. He would live there until he could build a small log cabin. He eventually got his log cabin built, but it took him longer than he had planned.

His idea was similar to any mountain man, he would trap beaver, fox, muskrat as well as any large game he could shoot. He picked a spot about six miles above the narrow gauge railroad that ran to the Cripple Creek gold mining fields. This way he could cut and sell lumber to the mines for propping and shoring, also short railroad ties for rails in the mines.

Russell had built lean toos before and found two large Ponderosa Pine trees about fourteen feet apart and cleared the limbs up to ten or eleven feet from the ground. He secured a large ridge beam between the two trees to support limb and brush walls. That is when the snow started coming down, lightly at first and before he finished everything was beginning to be covered

with snow. He hurriedly cut small trees and brush fastening them to the ridge pole until it got dark and he decided to sleep in the truck. It had stopped snowing and only had about four inches of snow on the ground, but it was COLD. He left his clothes on including his heavy coat, and then covered up with all the quilts he had with him. The next morning he built a large fire to warm up with and fixed a huge breakfast.

After working all day on the lean too, he thought that he had a secure place to stay out of the snow and cold. Russell had brought a small cook stove along and had it set up at one end with a fire going and also had a camp fire near the door to keep any animals out. He made his bed along the lean too wall, to help keep warm, he had even brought along some bed springs. He laid his tired body down and went to sleep that night proud of his work, all covered up with all the warm quilts. He now had a place to live while he built his log cabin. After living the mountain man life for a while you know how things can change, and fast, in an 8500 foot altitude.

Just before he went to bed it started snowing again, but it did not bother him because he had finished his temporary home and would be out of the cold, he thought. About midnight he woke up feeling like a 250 pound man was laying on top of him. He tried to move, but could not, the small green Ponderosa Pine trees had bent under the weight of heavy snow and they had him pinned to the ground. The bed springs had compressed enough that it took him what seemed like an hour to squirm out of bed. The snow had put the fire out and the lean too was caved in so much that it was hard for him to crawl to the opening, where he laid down with his quilts to try to get more sleep. He was scratched, bruised and cold. He was able to get the fire going again with some kindling that he had stashed nearby, but he couldn't get all of his covers because they were hung up in the limbs. While laying there awake the rest of the night, he wondered if he was going to get out alive.

The next morning there just wasn't much left of the lean too. The walls were all caved in and it was snowing hard all day. He tried to gather anything he could and was finally able to cook some food that afternoon. For three days his only job was to find enough wood to keep the fire going. It snowed about three feet, and it looked like it would never stop. Russell said later that the only thing that kept him alive was the hope that it would quit snowing.

On the fourth day it stopped snowing, after two more days of work, he had his lean too built back a little stronger than before. Then he looked at his truck, when he arrived he just stopped facing the camp, now he had to turn it around in three feet of snow so he could get out. He worked all day digging snow away from the truck and was only able to move it a few feet before dark. That night it started snowing again and it took him nine days of hard work and shoveling to get that truck turned around.

After getting his truck turned around, he felt like he could leave if he had too. He started cutting logs for his log cabin. Working through the winter, even though it seemed like it would snow every day, he finished his cabin in just over a month. This would be Russell's and Clara's Honeymoon cabin. They would only live there a few years before leaving.

MARRIED - CLARA LEOTA CURL

April 1st, 1920

About a year before Russell and Clara were married Russell bought him another motorcycle, this time it was a brand new Indian. He heard that they were organizing an endurance race at Colorado Springs. He absolutely loved motorcycle racing and he decided he was going to enter this race. This was an ENDURANCE race, up Cripple Creek over an old abandoned short line railroad right of way, then on around Pikes Peak and then on back to Manitou down Ute Pass.

This race was judged on some sort of point system that took horse power and weight into account. Russell installed a side car that had a 180 pound passenger in it. They wore out two chains and rope during the race, when they got above six thousand feet, they had to deal with deep snow. A man called Floyd Clymer beat him again, they had competed in several races over the last few years. Russell did take sixth place and won three hundred dollars.

Russell married Clara Curl on April 1st, 1920 at Colorado Springs, El Paso County, Colorado. Russell and Clara were married on that motorcycle, with Clara in the side car. They ran all over the mountains of western Colorado on their honeymoon. They had five children, This was his classmate that he fell in love with at the Concord school near Halfway Missouri.

When they moved into the new cabin on the mountain side homestead they tried to move Russell's turkeys and chickens with them. It didn't take long for the wolves to start taking them on a daily basis. The couple ended up killing all their turkeys and hung them up in a smoke house as winter set in and they were kept froze all winter. Russell did set traps for fur animals, he said he always had between 180 and 210 traps out at a time. He also cut wood for the mines and made good money doing it.

The winter of 1920 in Colorado was a very cold year with several blizzards. Several people who got caught out in the weather froze to death. Joseph Carter died that winter. After another accident on his motorcycle, during a blizzard, put Clara in the hospital a few days, Russell fixed up the Indian Motorcycle and sold it for more than he paid for it. It was time to move again.

1921 - MARSHFIELD MISSOURI

Russell Sage Carter had an uncle, Tollivar Carter, in Springfield Missouri who was considered Springfields first millionaire. In 1921 he owned about eighty one farms, several city properties and had a large home on the seven hundred block of south Jefferson Street.

Russell and Clara moved to one of Toll's farms near Marshfield Missouri, on the Nian-gua River bottom land. One day Toll showed up at the farm and wanted to talk to Russell. He had the paperwork to sell the 466 acre farm for only \$36,000.00, with the stipulation that they would pay when they could. Later, Russell found out that his uncle had made loans and financed several businesses that were not paying him back and he was slowly getting into financial trouble. He had financed the opening of a new bank in Springfield, The Queen City Bank, and he was having to borrow on all his properties to keep the bank open. Then the depression hit.

1924 - SALVATION ARMY DRUMMER FORT COLLINS COLORADO

I don't know how this happened, but Russell mentioned this in one of his books. In 1924 Russell said that him and his wife was in Fort Collins Colorado. They were working for the Salvation Army under a Captain Rice. Russell was the drummer and beat the drums as good as anyone could. He said everyone had fun making up new words for popular songs of that time. There was several cowboy songs like, "The Great Roundup In The Sky" and "The Dust Cloud"

1935 AKRON COLORADO

Again, no information except that they were living in Akron, Washington County, Colorado in 1935. This must have been a very short time and may have been just a place to stay until they decided where to go. I think he decided to move back to Missouri where his family was from. His Uncle, Tom, had moved back to Missouri and he had watched over him his whole life because Uncle Tom was mentally retarded. Even though his uncle was very much older than him they were very close.

1936?

POLK COUNTY MISSOURI

Back to Missouri, living in Polk County, Missouri. I don't know if he lived in town or the country. It was probably in or near Bolivar Missouri. Russell said he worked as a Welder and Mechanic for 25 years at Smiths Garage in Bolivar Missouri two blocks north of the square.

This is probably where he lived when he got the job at the new Fort Leonard Wood army base. It is about 100 miles from Polk County, so they would have had to move again, or he may have just came home on week ends while working there.

Construction of Fort Leonard Wood started in 1940. Russell was operating a Caterpillar Crawler Tractor building roads all over the fort. He said it rained all the time, and there was no bottom to the mud. He wrote two books about this time of his life, but I have not been able to find them.

The Building of Fort Leonard Wood, and the Doctor, by Russell Sage Carter

What Goes on Outside Fort Leonard Wood, by Russell Sage Carter

1946 - Mt. VERNON MISSOURI

After World War II, Russell and his wife, Clara, bought a farm at Mt. Vernon Missouri and lived there and farmed for six years. They raised about everything an Ozarks farm did, cows, hogs, chickens, ducks and geese. They even bought a Motel to run. Russell said they left with less money than they came with, but left richer because of their life being closer to God. It seemed like the outside world could not hurt them, they just let God and nature take care of them during this time.

1950's - FAIR GROVE MISSOURI

In Clara's obituary, it says that the Carters were living in Fair Grove and went to the Cedar Bluff Baptist Church. Fair Grove is where Russell's Uncle Tom lived. Russell was close to him, went to church with him and watched over him during his old age.

1959 - CLARA CURL CARTER PASSED AWAY

All I have is that Clara died in 1959. Russell said that he outlived two wives and had the privilege to take care of both of them in their sickness. I was able to find her obituary, published in Bolivar Herald Free Press. Apparently Russell had taken her to one of her daughter's (Miss Waneta Carter) homes in Seattle Washington to visit before she passed away.

Bolivar Herald-Free Press

Dec 10, 1959

CLARA L. CARTER

Mrs. Clara L. Carter, 58, Fair Grove, died Saturday morning, December 5, at Maynard hospital in Seattle, Wash., where she had been a patient two weeks.

Mrs. Carter was a former resident of Polk county, but had lived in Fair Grove the past few years. She was a member of the Cedar Bluff Baptist church at Fair Grove.

Survivors are her husband, Russell; three daughters, Mrs. Betty Dickey, Lees Summit, Miss Waneta Carter, Seattle, and Mrs. Fern Mettler, Hamilton, Mo.; a son, Courts, Overland Park, Kan.; her mother, Mrs. Lillie Hayes, Carl Junction; four sisters, two brothers, and nine grandchildren.

Services were held today, Thursday, December 10, at 1:00 p.m. in the Cedar Bluff Baptist church at Fair Grove. Burial was in Reynolds Chapel Cemetery with the Rev. Elbert Proctor officiating under the direction of the Butler Funeral Home of Bolivar.

JESSE JAMES

I will not put a date on this because it covers a lot of his life. Russell was fascinated with the idea that Jesse James and his friend, Robert Ford faked his death. The official story was that on April 3, 1862, Robert Ford killed his friend Jesse James for the reward.

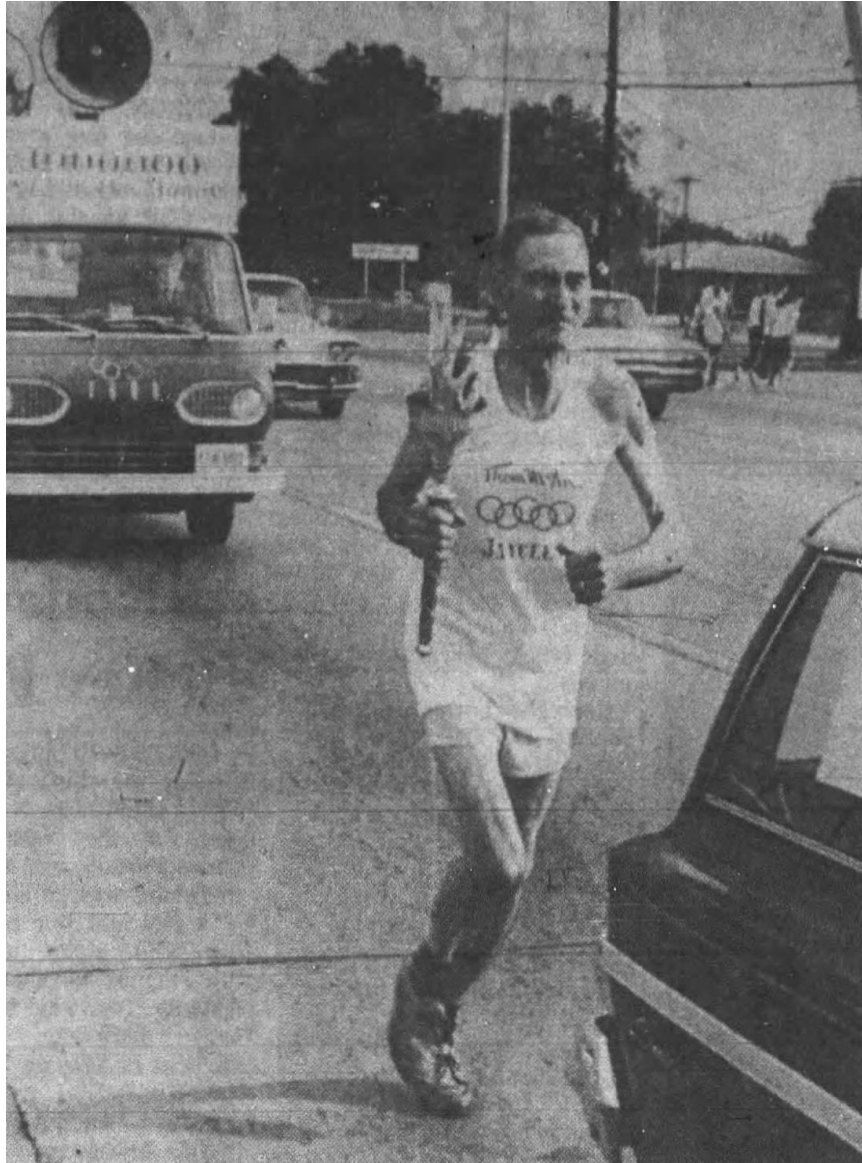
Over the years he visited with relatives of Jesse James and became close friends with some. In Russell's books, he tells how he was told that Jesse James and Robert Ford found someone who looked similar to Jesse, killed him and then turned the body over to the law. Jesse's mother was also in on it by identifying the body as Jesse.

Jesse was supposed to have moved on under another name and ended up having a family. This story has been around for a long time, but Russell was convinced that it is true and it was the subject of some of his public talks.

1960? - MOVE TO SPRINGFIELD MO

In 1964, the story about Russell running with the Olympic Torch, it stated that he lived at Route 11, Springfield Missouri. I am not sure, but this could be the Division Street address at the time, it may not have been in the city limits yet. I do know that he lived to the north of Springfield until he moved to town.

November 11th 1964 - OLYMPICS RUN FOR THE MONEY



Springfield News Leader

In September of 1964 the United States Olympic Commity sponsored a "Run For The Money" event that was expected to collect over one million dollars to help fund the Olympics. During the month of September they ran from New York City to Los Angeles promoting the event. On September 1st Jesse Owens started the run in New York and it got to springfield on September 11th.

Russell Carter carried the Olympic Torch into Springfield and ran it for a half mile down Glenstone Ave. before passing it off to the next runner. He was proud of this and saved his tee-shirt to remember it by. The article said that the 65 year old was from Route 11, Springfield Missouri.

Over the 3155 mile run it was expected to have 3500 runners carry the torch. It ended at the Los Angeles Coliseum on September 26th, where President Johnson was at the finish line to receive the torch.

In Springfield, the newspaper said, "The 65 year old Carter who, set a good pace for the parade of followers on North Glenstone, said that he used to run professionally in Wyoming and Colorado." They did not realize that his experience was running from the U.S. Calvary as a runaway Indian boy.

1969 - SPRINGFIELD MO 3569 W. Division Street

I was able to find Russell S. Carter and Minnie R. Carter living at the 3569 west Division Street location in the 1969 Springfield City Directory. Russells employment was "Retired". They were both listed as Residents until 1985 when Minnie died. I will give you the official name he called her in one the book "Below The Thunder or Uncle Tom of Bois D' Arc", Minnie-haha Rebecca Cromer Owen Carter. I did find different initials along with Minnie's name that was confusing until I saw this explanation.

In the 1985 Springfield City Directory, Russell was listed by himself at the Division Street home. This is where he lived when he wrote his books about his life.

1970 - MINNIEHAHA BECAME SICK

I don't know when Russell married his second wife, Minnie, but they were able to have a good life together traveling.

Russell said that 1970 was the year that "Minniehaha", became sick and was soon in a wheelchair. Russell was determined to take care of his wife, so that is what he did for fourteen years. Sitting at home with nothing to do, but take care of his wife, gave him time to think about his life. When family and friends visited, he would tell his life's stories to them. They all encouraged him to write down his stories and that is where the majority of this book came from.

He wrote his first book "From Pawnee Bill to the Moon, 101 Years of Southwest Heritage" during this time.



THIS IS MY MINNIEHAHA IN THE YEAR 1970. THE FIRST YEAR
OF HER FOURTEEN YEARS OF SICKNESS.
SHE COULD STAND ALONE AT THIS TIME. A WHEEL CHAIR FROM
THEN ON. SHE NEVER SAID SHE WANTED TO DIE, BUT SAID
MANY TIMES - I A M T R Y I N G -

COMMEMORATING BICENTENNIAL 1975 - 1976 - RE-TRACING BOONE'S TRAIL

Russell was one of eight men who commemorated the opening of the 368 mile long, Boone's Trace that was marked by Daniel Boone in 1775. This trail that Daniel Boone cleared went from his home at Wilkesboro North Carolina to Fort Boonesborough Kentucky. This was the main trail that was used for years to open the new territory to the west. It started as just a small trail and later people widened it so wagons could move through it.

The leader and organizer of the group was Mr. R. Ivy Moore of North Wilkesboro North Carolina, the rest were ready for a great adventure, Chief Russell Sage Carter, Steve Adams, Marshal Ralph Hooker, Charles Burk, Art Lane, Little Ivy Moore and Dwight Miller. Ivy Moore played the part of Daniel Boone and Seventy Nine year old, Russell Carter played the part of their Cherokee Chief that guided them along the trail.

This group of eight men started their long walk on April 10th 1975 to a big fan fair, this adventure was planned for years and their route was arranged where they would reach towns about the same time Daniel Boone did in 1775. Hundreds of school children came to see them off as they left the ruins of the old Boone homestead headed west. As they went into towns, the Towns people would welcome them with a big celebration, some gave them the key to the city, but the news media was always there telling their story. They would give talks, mostly to children, one school gymnasium had over 700 another over 900 and in Kingsport Tennessee they had a crowd of over 3000 people. In most of the small towns, they would parade through town and stop to rest while they talked to the people on the street.

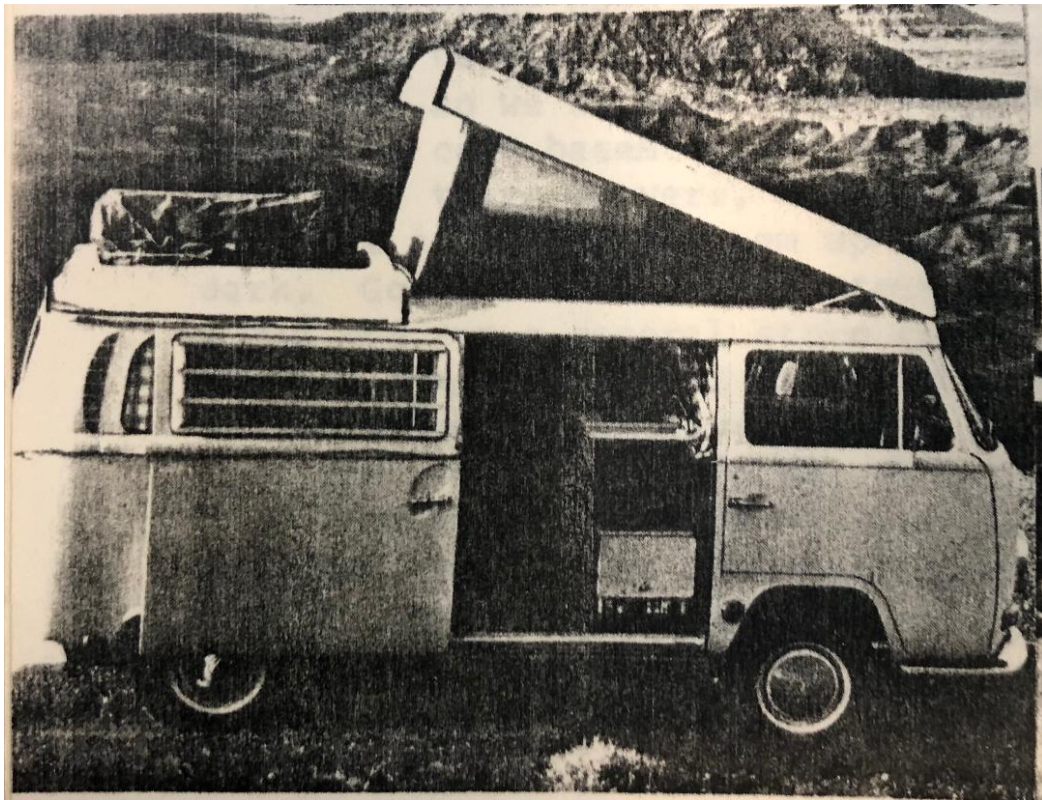
It took the eight men four weeks to reach the old Fort Boonesborough, tired, but happy to have done something that not many people have done. When Russell was asked why he decided to take this trip, he said that he now understood some of the hardships that his people had experienced during the Trail of Tears. One thing that thrilled him was the letters he received when he got home, children all along the trail told him how much meeting him meant to them.

In 1975 and 1976, Russell helped sponsor five wagon trains. He would be dressed in his full Chief Russell costume and walk along the wagons and talk to the children riding in the wagons. One travelled from Springfield Missouri to Cassville, 86 miles of walking in four days. He said it was well worth it because the children loved it so much. These wagon trains had between twenty to fifty wagons with twenty to thirty riders. One of the wagons would carry Russell's teepee so he could set it up if they had time to, he said it was a little harder than a camping tent.

Because of his experience talking to children about his life. He would talk at schools, Boy Scout Camps, and anywhere that someone wanted him to speak the rest of his life.

1983 - TRIP IN VOLKSWAGEN BUS RV

In the 1982 OR 1983 Russell bought a Volkswagon Bus RV for him and his wife, Minnie-haha, to travel all over the country he explored as a child. Family and friends had encouraged him to try, but it took him a while to decide to go. Using the RV made it more comfortable for him and his invalid wife to just stop and rest anywhere they wanted. My wife Rita and I are trying to follow his lead, we have bought a small RV that we can enjoy while traveling.



Russell used the nickname for this VW Bus, "Little Hulty", but after traveling over the hills and mountains on this trip, changed it to "Little Ida Rathernot".

Russell put an extra battery in the van that could be used for extra lights. He took at least two flashlights and a big supply of extra batteries for them. He found every spot he could to store food and supplies in the van. He went on a trial trip to see how everything would work. They were on a tight budget, so he cooked most of their food on a little camp stove that he brought along. They made the few day trip fine, but he still was afraid that an old man with an invalid wife should not really go on a trips that would take several months.

He finally decided that they had nothing to lose and would be an exciting adventure to both of them. At this time in Minniehaha's life, she was unable to take care of herself, she was completely dependent on Russell to take care of her. Russell said that it seemed like they had to stop at every road side park they passed to cook their meal and clean Minnie's clothes. He joked that he would hear, "Look Mommy, what is that crazy man doing?" This would be her last trip and she thoroughly enjoyed it.

The time and effort was worth it. They had the time of their life looking up the towns that were no longer there. That little VW bus went cross country where there were no roads. Sometimes when they stopped, they did not see any sign of another person or farm for miles around. Russell would find signs of where some of the long gone towns were and sometimes even found deserted ghost towns.

At one of these ghost towns that he found in Colorado, he saw an old horse stable with an old gas station by the road. He remembered the stable, one cold rainy night when him and some other cowboys came into town to get warm, a friendly old man let them stay in the stable for the night. The town seemed deserted, but while he was thinking about days gone by he heard someone cough. He looked around at the deserted buildings and finally found who it was. It was a young boy about 14 years old sitting in front of one of the buildings.

He walked over to the boy and started talking to him and asked if anyone was living around there. He said, sure, me and my grandma, and there are some people living at a farm over that way. Russell asked if his grandmother was home and whether he could talk to her. The young boy just said yes, come on in. Russell told him to go inside and ask if it was ok, so the boy went inside and came right back out and said it was ok. But, she said the house was a mess.

The house was a mess, but Russell sat right down and told the woman about his experience at the stable. The old woman smiled and said he was that way, helping anyone he could. Then she said, that was my husband, he has been gone a long time. Russell found out that the woman just refused to leave her home and her grandson was watching over her. The closest people lived over five miles away, but would bring her food and supplies when she needed them.

They visited Palo Duro Canyon in September of 1983 and said they were the only visitors and the Rangers took care of them to make sure they were ok. They followed them to see where they were camping so they could find them if needed.

THE LAZY H QUARTER CIRCLE RANCH

The highlight of his trip was visiting part of his Kenneth Carter Clan who owned the Lazy H Quarter Circle Ranch. This large ranch that Russell said would make the Ponderosa look like a little family farm, covered thousands of acres near Livermore Colorado. Kenneth's wife took care of Minniehaha so Russell could explore the ranch.

Russell said that their favorite relative at this large ranch was a grandson of the clan,

Bryan Carter who actually raised hogs. They kept them washed, cooled, bedded, and pampered. Bryan's wonderful wife helped take care of Minnehaha for several weeks. He said he would love to go back and visit again.

Russell really enjoyed the freedom of having someone he could trust taking care of his wife that he loved so much. He went hunting on the ranch with the family for deer and elk, they even went Prairie Dog and Rabbit hunting. He said he missed every time, he would not kill any animal again. But he did not tell them that, they just thought that, that old man can't hit anything.

Russell had the chance to work cattle again on the ranch. He helped round up over 100 calves to doctor, he actually spent his time at the "Cook Wagon Truck. They castrated, vaccinated, and sprayed their eyes and ears before branding them.

While at the "Cook Wagon Truck", Russell looked at all the food and fixin's for the large group of cowboys and wondered why they did not have any meat. The cook came by and picked up a 30-30 rifle that was in the back of the truck and asked him if he wanted to help. Russell had nothing better to do so he just went along to see. The cook picked one of the large 1000 pound steers and shot it. Dressing the meat right there on the spot. This is how they got their meat at every meal while they were there.

Russell said he ate over a thousand dollars worth of steak while he was on that ranch. Beef at every meal and all you wanted. he said he gained 40 pounds while there. He did exaggerate sometimes. One of his quotes when telling this kind of story was, "I wouldn't lie to you".

Another thing that he told about the ranch was that they produced watermelon and cantalope seeds. He said he watched as they would take large beautiful cantalope and just scoop out the seeds and throw the fruit to the hogs. No surprise, he and Minnie loaded up on cantalope while they were there.

This is just a short look at his travels, he wrote a lot about it in his book, Below The Thunder or Uncle Tom of Bois D' Arc. On his way back home, he did go through Pawnee Oklahoma, but I think it was time to get his "Minnehaha" home. She had been sick since 1973, he never mentioned what she had, but said she could not stand on her own soon after becoming sick.

Russell wrote in, Below The Thunder or Uncle Tom of Bois D' Arc, "Only a - FOOL - would take 16 pages, just to tell about two old people traveling across five states in an old wore out camper but me. The only person to compare to me is the one - - - who will read it."

Just as a note, on August 11, 1983 a series on Chief Russell Sage Carter was started by the Ash Grove Commonwealth newspaper in the Mason's Jar Column. It contained some of his experiences on this trip.

3-15-1984 - MINNIEHAH PASSED AWAY



After fourteen years of sickness, Russell's second wife, Minniehaha, Minnie Rebecca Cromer Owen Carter passed away. The following is part of a letter sent to friends and relatives after her death. He did a lot of his typing in capital letters.

MY MINNIE REALLY DIED WITH A SMILE ON HER FACE, AND IN MY ARMS. I AM SURE SHE HAD SUFFERED LONG ENOUGH, AND SHE NOW IS AT REST.

SO, MAY I SAY THANKS BE TO GOD FOR ALL GOOD BLESSINGS AND MY MINNIEHAHA. ALL OF YOU MADE IT MUCH EASIER FOR ME, SO I AM INCLOSING A LITTLE POEM (IF YOU PLEASE), FOR YOU ABOUT MY MINNIE.

MAY GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU EVERY ONE. I AM SORRY I AM LATE SAYING "THANK YOU". IF I HAVE FORGOTTEN ANY, I AM SURE THAT GOD WILL REMEMBER THEM FOR ME.

CHIEF RUSSELL SAGE CARTER

- THIS IS THE DAY I LAY MY MINNIE AWAY -

THIS IS THE DAY YOU MAY LAY YOUR LOVED ONE AWAY
YES MY BROTHER, IT WILL COME TO YOU SOME DAY.
FRIENDS AND FAMILY WILL HELP YOU LAY YOUR LOVED ONE AWAY
THEN ALONE, YOU MUST COME HOME TO AN EMPTY HOUSE TO STAY,
TO AN EMPTY HOUSE ONCE FILLED WITH LAUGHTER, TO CRY AND PRAY.

I HEAR HER VOICE FROM THE BED ROOM - THE KITCHEN - WHAT DID SHE SAY?
I WALK ALL THROUGH THE HOUSE TO SEE, BUT MY LOVED ONE HAS GONE AWAY.
I FONDLE HER GARMENTS, I CARESS HER EMPTY BED
IT WILL TAKE A TIME TO REALIZE THAT SHE IS DEAD.
A SAD EMPTY FEELING FROM YOUR FOOT TO YOUR HEAD
YOU MUST ACCEPT IT ALL, OR YOU TOO WILL BE DEAD.

MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY DID ALL THEY COULD DO
MY TWO PREACHERS CAME, THEIR WIVES CAME TOO.
HER CHURCH HAD PRAYED FOR MY MINNIEHAHA ALL THESE FOURTEEN YEARS
I REALLY TRIED, BUT SOMETIMES FAILED, WORKING THROUGH ALL THOSE TEARS.
THOSE FOURTEEN YEARS WERE THE MOST VALUABLE YEARS OF MY LIFE
AS GOD MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR ME TO CARE FOR MY LOVING WIFE.

MINNIEHAHA A MOST WONDERFUL MOTHER, A LADY - AND MY WIFE,
AT HELPING OTHERS, SHE SPENT HER ENTIRE LIFE.
SHE SPREAD GOODNESS AND MERCY ALL THE DAYS OF HER LIFE.
I AM SURE MY MINNIEHAHA SHALL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER. - - - -

CHIEF RUSSELL SAGE CARTER

1985 - WINTER IN SPRINGFIELD

When I knew him, he loved to call and tell me a joke that he had made up. Here is a sample of his work published in the Springfield Leader & Press on February 10th 1985. He was living alone at this time.

I tell you all this snow and cold winter of 1985 has about got me down. I simply can't keep warm. I just now look out the window and darned if the snow hasn't turned blue.

The kids built a nice snowman and as I came in from picking up the Leader & Press newspaper, that snowman was begging me to take him into the house to get warm.

That ain't all, either, No sereebob. As I walked along my shadow froze to the sidewalk. And I called my niece in Arizona and she said my breath came out and caused the cactus to freeze.

My wife baked a cake and held it out the window a minute so it would frost itself.

The house across the street caught on fire and be darned if them firemen didn't want me to set my house on fire so they wouldn't freeze to death.

Why, I keep the deep freezer and refrigerator door open to warm the kitchen.

I was downtown t'other evening when the police saw a man robbing the main bank. They yelled for him to "freeze," and he did.

My false teeth are chattering and ain't in my mouth.

I had to climb up on my tall house to break the smoke from the chimney.

Even world leaders can't get into a heated argument.

I let our dog out and had to go break him loose from the fire hydrant.

The poor rabbits, the birds and all the animals are gonna starve unless all you good people go right now and buy some grain and even hay for the rabbits. Please all, do that. They belong to God too, you know.

Chief Russell Sage Carter, Springfield

1986 - HALEYS COMET

In 1910 Haleys Comet passed by the earth and Russell Sage Carter saw it pass by when he was in New Mexico. It was a big event and many people had some funny ideas about it. Russell in the title of From Pawnee Bill to the Moon, he had a sub title of "By way of Haleys Comet". He wrote that, "I plan to stay around until Haleys Comet comes again in 1986, not long to wait as I am used to waiting." Another time he wrote, "I plan to live until 1986 and go out west to see that Haleys Comet as she comes back again, to see if she has grown any since she scared me and those Prairie Dogs down on the Pecos in New Mexico in 1910".

He made it to see Haleys Comet again, but I have not found any information that he wrote about the second event. He did have a special event happen that year though, he got married. He had written that, "It's not bad to get old, but pray to God that you don't have to do it alone".

1986 - MARRIED AGAIN Lula Ellen Jackson Carter

On October 10, 1986 Russell sage Carter, 87 years old, married Lula Ellen Jackson, who was 73 years old. As I said before Russel did not think you needed to be alone. I met Lula, but she would leave the room during our visits and let Russell talk about his past. He did tell me that Lula had him move some of his things out to the chicken house.

Russell and Lula were both listed in the Springfield City Directories until Russells death. She moved soon after Russell's death and was not in the 1994 directory.

12-15-1988 - TRAIL OF TEARS

In a book written by John K. Hulston called Panhandle Profiles, it includes an interview of Chief Russell Sage Carter about the Trail of Tears. In the interview it relates the story about the 150th anniversary of the Trail of Tears. On September 17, 1988 a group of about 125 people followed an old wagon trail that originated at Red Clay Tennessee and went on the route that went through Greene and Christian County Missouri. The trail that included horse and mule drawn wagons, followed the original route as closely as possible and ended at Tahlequah Oklahoma, in Indian Territory.

According to John K. Hulston, Russell was the nearest living decendent of one of the original group members, his grandmother who was taken on the trail as a baby. She was a full blood Chickasaw who had to go through this hard time. Russell said that the Trail of Tears is what it is known by now. "Nuna-da-ui-taum-yi is a Cherokee name for it, which means March of the Broken Spirit, or Winter of Suffering. My grannie called it, The long time we suffer, walk'em much, bury many dead." His Great Grandmother kept a diary and recorded their hardships along the trail.

Russell said that he participated in the anniversary event as much as he could. He said that the caravan followed the "Old Wire Road," "Telegraph Road," "Butterfield Overland Stage Route," and the "Fayetteville Road" through the Springfield area. He went on to say: "But my cup of tea is making talks about it to youngsters. I have addressed at least 14,000 children under 13 years, the past 30 years. I'm proud to say that not a single one was ever rude. I find children more interested than adults about the Indians. They want to know the real truth about the Indians."

As an incentive to convince the Indians to go along with this move, the government promised wagons, harnesses, food, seed for farming, tents, clothing and medical care. Most of these promises were never kept. On his grandmothers group, the doctor got sick and died near Jackson Missouri. If they could, they would bury the dead in rough wood coffins, but most were just wrapped in canvas cloth material and burried in shallow graves covered with rocks. Some of the Indians had black slaves and some migrated with them, some were freed, but white slaveholders just took a lot of them.

Three children were buried in Springfield Missouri on the Bunch McDaniel farm. According to Russell, "The graves are just north of the intersection of Campbell Street and James River Freeway on the east side of Campbell near the old spring (about three blocks southwest of today's Kickapoo High School)."

Russell's goal was to not let the story of the Trail of Tears be forgotten, he believed that over the years the story will survive and be more important to future generations to remember. He wanted to have the government make the Trail of Tears a National Monument Trail.

At the conclusion of this interview, Russell told John Hulston, "You come back. Me gonna be here 'nuther ten years or die trying."

1989 - MY VISITS

Russell said that he would wake up in the night remembering about something that happened in his life, he would get up and write it down right then so he would not forget. That is why we know so much about him.

Russell was a true cowboy and wore his boots around the house. He told me about the “Corns” on his feet that made them hurt. So he just cut out that part of the boots that rubbed his feet. His boots were well ventilated with holes all around his toes. His hearing was going bad, so he had me fix up some headphones that he could plug into his TV and hear what was going on.

After a few visits, I decided to take my son, Rodney, with me so he could meet this man who had such a unique life. Rodney did not want to go, but I insisted and he told me later that he was glad I did. He sat quietly listening to Russell’s stories. He loved to have company and was always excited when he knew I was coming.

He took me and Rodney out to his chicken house where he had a fire ring or pit in the middle, with different artifacts laying around it. His Olympic tee shirt and awards were hanging on the walls. Letters from Presidents and even one from Jimmy Carters mother, were there.

One time, when I was about ready to leave, he asked if I would take him to the Springfield Indian Center. He was still a wanderer, he said someone would take him home.

In his books, he talked about not wanting to go to a rest home. He was very thankful for the “Meals on Wheels” program and commented on “The Church Ladies” that came by to check on him and visit.

One thing that I really enjoyed was when he would call just to tell me one of his new jokes that he made up. I remember thinking that I wish I could do that. I am truly glad to have met him and I am proud to be able to call him a friend.

Roger D. Fortner

May 24th, 1994

Chief Russell Sage Carter passed away on May 24th 1994 in Springfield, Greene County, Missouri. All I could find in the Springfield newspapers was this short death notice.

Russell S. Carter, 94

Services for Russell S. Carter, Springfield, will be at 10 a.m. Friday in Greenlawn Funeral Home North. Burial will be in Reynolds Chapel Cemetery, Buffalo.

Mr. Carter, a retired farmer, died at 10:06 a.m. Tuesday in Cox Medical Center North. Visitation will be from 7 to 8 p.m. today in the funeral home.

I didn't know when Russell died. I think his age was actually 95 when he died. I went by to visit him and someone else answered the door. The house had been rented, and they told me that he had passed away. They mentioned that all his personal stuff was put in the chicken house and that I could go look if I wanted too. Everything was just like Russell had left it, the fire ring and most of the artifacts were laying on the ground around it. His Olympic T shirt, letters and awards were still hanging on the walls. Even the Buffalo skull was still hanging there with the bullet hole in the forehead. When I got home I was able to get in touch with one of his relatives and convinced them to pick it all up and preserve his herritage. I went back two weeks later and everything was gone. They said they would see if the museum at Fort Leonard Wood wanted them.

I hope you enjoyed reading about this man who had such an amazing life. When I started putting his adventures together, I decided to put dates to things as close as I could. He left his large family when he was about six years old and I realized that his family just had to assume he was no longer alive. Russell said as he walked through this rough land of Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, he would find human skeletons scatered along the trails and their was no way to figure out who they were. He made it on his own and was able to tell his story of survival.

It seemed like I was always finding something new about his life. There is never a good time to stop looking, I think through this book you know Who Chief Russell Sage Carter Was.

Roger D. Fortner

CHIEF RUSSELL SAGE CARTER

As an ending to Chief Russell Sage Carter's story, I will end with a poem that he wrote after Minniehaha past away. It gives his view on how life should be, giving and helping others, while making sure your life is right with God.

- A FEW MORE DAYS AND I TOO MUST GO -

THE EVENING SUN IS SINKING LOW, A FEW MORE DAYS AND I TOO MUST GO
TO A PLACE MUCH WHITER THAN THE FALLING SNOW,
WHERE GOD HIMSELF HAS PROMISED THAT ALL MAY GO.
I HAVE TO MEET THE DEEDS THAT I HAVE DONE, WHERE THERE WILL BE NO SETTING SUN.
THIS RACE OF LIFE I'VE ALMOST RUN, THANK GOD THE VICTORY I HAVE WON.

ALL MY LOVED ONES HAVE GONE ON BEFORE, ONE BY ONE THEY ALL HAVE GONE.
I BURIED MY WIFE A WEEK AGO, AND NOW TIS TIME FOR ME TO GO.
BUT NO ONE NEED BE LOST, NO NOT A SINGLE ONE,
FOR TO SAVE MANKIND, GOD SENT HIS SON.

OH YES THE EVENING SUN IS SINKING LOW
AND JUST A FEW MORE DAYS AND I TOO MUST GO.
I DID THE BEST I COULD, FAILED MANY TIMES BUT NOW I TOO MUST GO.
WHERE THERE WILL BE NO SORROW, NO SUFFERING AND THIS I KNOW.
OUR GOD LOVES US AND WILL WASH US WHITER THAN THE SNOW.

SO PLEASE JUST BURY ME QUIETLY THEN RUN ALONG,
FOR SOMEONE ELSE WILL NEED YOU AND IT WON'T BE LONG.
IN THIS WORLD, TRY TO GIVE NOT TAKE,
SELF INTEREST IS A SAD MISTAKE.
TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME NOW, DON'T YOU SEE,
THEN MAKE PEACE WITH GOD AND PREPARE TO FOLLOW ME.

CHIEF

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

I have used several sources for the writing this book. I have collected Ozark Region books my whole life and I found two of Russell's books in a small Springfield, Missouri book store. When reading "Retracing Boones Trail And Trappers Wife" in the late 1980's, I thought that anyone who could walk 250 miles at the age of eighty might still be alive. When I looked in the Springfield phone book, there he was, living at the same address listed in his books. I was able to contact him and set up meeting him on the next Saturday. This was the first of many meetings. When I could, I would go over to his house and visit for hours. One Saturday, I made my son, Rodney, go with me and he really enjoyed meeting this amazing man who lived in a by gone time. Russell was truly a one of a kind.

BOOKS BY RUSSELL SAGE CARTER

1973 - From Pawnee Bill to the Moon, 101 Years of Southwest Heritage

1978 - Retracing Boones Trail And Trappers Wife

1979 - History of the Great American Cowboy

1983? - Below The Thunder or Uncle Tom of Bois D' Arc

The Building of Fort Leonard Wood, and the Doctor

What Goes on Outside Fort Leonard Wood

Little Blue Rose The Cheyenne (Very small distribution to friends)

May have wrote a booklet about the Trail of Tears

OTHER BOOKS

Panhandle Profiles, By John K. Hulston

Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show, By Allen L. Farnum

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1900 - U.S. Census Records - Burnham Township, Pawnee County Oklahoma

Pawnee Oklahoma Historical Society

Oklahoma Historical Society

Pawnee Oklahoma Library

Pawnee Oklahoma County Courthouse

Pawnee Bill Museum

Encyclopedia Britannica

Family Search

Find a Grave

Pawneeland - Wordpress.com - Blog

Springfield News Leader

Ash Grove Commonwealth Newspaper

City Directories of Springfield Missouri