THE BALENTINES, FATHER AND SON, IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

THE REVEREND HAMILTON BALENTINE

Hamilton Balentine was born January, 1817, in Churchtown, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. His father was Irish and both of his parents died before he was six years of age, leaving him entirely destitute of the means of support. His early years were spent in the family and service of a farmer in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, where he distinguished himself by his quickness, intelligence, industry and fidelity.

A biographical sketch of the Reverend Hamilton Balentine states:

After about two years he was transferred into the service and family of Mr. William Hamill, where the same traits continued to be manifested along with a growing fondness for reading and study. While here he also became hopefully converted. These so attracted the attention and warm regard of intelligent friends that he was aided to secure an education. After attending an ordinary country school some time, he went to Lawrenceville (N. J.) High School, under the care of the Rev. Samuel H. Hamill. Here he studied industriously until fitted for college. In this High School he acted as an instructor for some time. He became also a member of the Lawrenceville Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Balentine was graduated from the College of New Jersey at Princeton in 1845, and the same year entered Princeton Theological Seminary. Here he passed through the full course of three years, distinguished for his diligence, regularity, and piety, and was regularly graduated in 1848. Having devoted his life to the Foreign Missionary work, and an urgent call having come for help to the Indian Missions, he at once proceeded to Kowetach, a station among the Creek Indians, and in July, 1848 devoted himself to his chosen work with an ardor which never abated while he lived.

Before going to the Indians he was licensed by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, Feb. 2, 1848, and ordained as an evangelist by the same Presbytery, May 29, 1848.

In 1850, Mr. Balentine was appointed to assist in giving instruction at Spencer Academy, among the Choctaws, and labored there from 1850 to 1852, at which time the board opened a boarding-school for females at Wapanucka among the Chickasaws. The building at that place was so far completed that Mr. Balentine opened the institution about Oct. 1, 1852, with forty pupils, but they soon increased to one hundred in number. He remained

1Princeton Theological Seminary's Necrological Report, April, 1878. Sincere thanks are due Miss Marye Pochyla, of the Office of the Secretary of Princeton University for the above report and for the added information that Mr. Balentine was admitted to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) as a junior on November 13, 1843, and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1845. Throughout his college course he used the letter "A" before his name, writing it A. Hamilton Balentine.
here, laboring efficiently, until the fall of 1855, when he visited Philadelphia for medical advice, owing to severe illness in his family.

On his return after a few months, he was placed in charge of the boarding-school for females at Good Water, among the Choctaws, and continued to labor there until 1858. Early in 1859, he returned to Wapanocka, again taking charge of the school there, and laboring at the same time as an evangelist in the surrounding region. He remained there until after the breaking out of the Civil War in 1861, when all communications with the Board of Foreign Missions was cut off, as well as all support from its funds. Nevertheless he continued to labor zealously for the spiritual good of the Indians, teaching and preaching at various points among them until the beginning of 1876, when, through excessive labors, his health became feeble and precarious. He was finally seized with a fierce attack of pneumonia, by which his life was ended . . . . in the sixtieth year of his age . . . . Mr. Balentine was a humble, earnest, faithful and self-denying missionary . . . .

Very few, if any, other teachers had the wide experience among the Five Civilized Tribes that Mr. Balentine had; he taught in the Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee nations and from all accounts he was successful and much esteemed among all of the Indians.

After the Civil War the Balentines spent two years at Park Hill before moving to Vinita for three years. The Cherokee Council appointed him superintendent of the Female Seminary and he had charge of that institution for a year before he was stricken with pneumonia from which he died on February 22, 1876 "sincerely and deservedly regretted by all who knew him and felt his influence." He was buried in the Missionary Cemetery near Park Hill, close to the grave of his friend Dr. Samuel Austin Worcester.

Hamilton Balentine, married Anna Hoyt, on June 14, 1849. She was a granddaughter of George Lowry, assistant principal chief for many years during the period when John Ross was principal chief.

Miss Hoyt was the first teacher in the first school in Tahlequah when it was started in 1845. Her salary was $20.00 a month and she boarded at the home of Black Coat.

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2 H. F. & E. S. O'Beirne, *The Indian Territory*, Saint Louis, 1892, 138; Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Park Hill* (Muskogee, 1943), p. 150; *The Cherokee Advocate*, April 18, 1884, p. 1, col. 7, copied from the *St. Louis Evangelist*. Mrs. Balentine, a talented musician, continued to teach music in the Female Seminary after the death of her husband. She survived her husband until March, 1890.

3 Anna Hoyt was a granddaughter of the Reverend Ard Hoyt and her father was Milo Hoyt. Her mother, Lydia Hoyt, was born in 1800. She reared a large family and lived to a ripe old age. She spoke Cherokee and English fluently. She was educated at Brainerd Mission in the old Cherokee Nation, and she translated the first English hymn ever sung by the Cherokees. Her home was about six miles from Tahlequah, Indian Territory (notes by Mr. William H. Balentine in a letter to Grant Foreman, September 25, 1932).

4 Black Coat is the correct name of Thomas Blackcoat Wolf, according to Mr. William H. Balentine of Tahlequah.
When Walter Lowrie, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions visited Koweta Mission in April, 1847, he entered into an agreement with the Creek chiefs for the enlargement of the station from twenty-nine students to forty boarders who were to be financed in part by the national school fund. When Tullahassee Mission was completed the Reverend Robert M. Loughridge superintendent of Koweta, was put in charge of it in 1848 and he was replaced at Koweta by the Reverend Hamilton Balentine who had previously taught at Tullahassee.5

The Reverend Robert M. Loughridge gave these notes on the early work of Hamilton Balentine:6

In 1848 Rev. H. Balentine was appointed Superintendent of Koweta Mission, while I was directed to superintend the new school of 80 pupils, the buildings for which were about to be erected at Tullahassee.

In 1849 Rev. H. Balentine and Miss Nancy Hoyt, teacher of the school were united in the marriage relation. The mission was very prosperous under their management, until in 1850 they were appointed to take charge of Wapanucka Female Boarding School, which had just been erected at great cost by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions among the Chickasaw Indians.

Charles Barnett, a student at Koweta Mission wrote on March 5, 1850: “My Dear young friends, . . . . there are at this place about thirty scholars, fifteen boys & fifteen girls . . . . . Revd. H. Balentine has been or rather is our present teacher. Revd. J. Ross Ramsey is the superintendent at this place. He and Mrs. Ramsey takes charge of the boys, and Mr. and Mrs. Balentine takes charge of the girls. . . . .”

From Vinita, January 26, 1872, Mr. Balentine wrote to Miss S. L. McBeth a missionary, in great detail regarding various missionaries and teachers. He related that in May, 1852, Hon. Walter Lowrie had visited the missions and while he was at Wapanucka he wrote to Balentine at Spencer Academy (which had been repaired and put into operation again,) directing him to go to Wapanucka as soon as the term closed, so as to get the place ready to open school there in October.

Wapanucka Academy was located about five miles northeast of the town of Wapanucka, Johnston County, Oklahoma.6a It was about twelve miles northwest of Boggy Depot, near the celebrated Texas Road and two miles west of the Chickasaw-Chocotaw line. The

6 Robert M. Loughridge, History of Mission Work Among the Creek Indians from 1832 to 1861 (Library of the Oklahoma Historical Society).
school was established in 1851-52. Mr. Hamilton Balentine became superintendent in October, 1852. He was assisted by his wife and two young women teachers.

In August Mr. and Mrs. Balentine arrived at the academy, both having been delayed by illness. The Balentines, Miss Hannah M. Green, and Miss M. F. Thompson opened the school with forty pupils. The place was without beds and tables, but there was plenty of food and plain clothing for the girls. Balentine drew funds from the Board and the Indian Department on his vouchers in the sum of $75.00 per student annually. The first year forty girls attended and the second there were fifty. For the remaining two years that the Balentines spent at Wapanucka there were one hundred pupils.

Mr. Balentine had charge of the mission until July, 1855 when he turned it over to Mr. and Mrs. (C. H.) Wilson. At the urgent request of Wilson the Balentines returned to Wapanucka in 1859 from the Creek country to complete the school year. They remained to close the institution and sell off the property which was used by the soldiers of the Chickasaw Nation and later by refugees. In 1862, the Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury was married to Miss Child, a former teacher in his school, at Boggy Depot by Mr. Balentine.7

From Spencer Academy, September 1, 1852, Alexander Reid sent his report to Wm. Wilson, Esq., U. S. Agent, Choctaw Nation.

The highest number of pupils present at Spencer was 124. Between October 6 and November 1—a period of about seven weeks—twelve boys left the school not to return. “All but one ran away, and were not sent back.” Between December 1 and the final examination in June only six boys left the school, and five left because of illness.

The teaching was carried on in four distinct schools. The teachers were the Reverend H. Balentine, Reverend John Edwards, Joseph Turner, and Miss F. R. Thompson.8

Superintendent Hamilton Balentine made his first report to Choctaw Agent Cooper on July 15, 1856, from Good Water. The school was evidently reopened that year and there were forty-two pupils in attendance. Thirty-eight were boarders and the other four were day students.

7 Anna Lewis (ed.), “Letters regarding Choctaw Missions and Missionaries,” Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XVII, No. 3 (September, 1939), pp. 275-77. Cyrus Kingsbury was born at Alstead, New Hampshire, Nov. 20, 1786. He was stationed at Brainerd Mission in 1817, at Elliot in 1818, Mayhew in 1820 and at Pine Ridge in 1836. His first wife was Sarah B. Varnum of Dracut, Massachusetts. They were married at New Orleans December 24, 1818. Mrs. Kingsbury died at Mayhew September 15, 1822. He next married Electa May a native of Goshen, Massachusetts. She was born March 12, 1783 and they became husband and wife at Mayhew on May 10, 1824.

8 Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1852, p. 133.
Classes were held daily in the New Testament and there was a class in McGuffey's Fourth Reader; eleven read in Goodrich's Third Reader, five in McGuffey's Second Reader and six used the Gradual Primer. Daily classes were held for writing and Davies' and Chase's Arithmetics were used as well as Greenleaf's Mental Arithmetic. Smith's Primary Geography was taught and older pupils used Mitchell's Geography and Atlas. Spelling was a regular subject and Well's English Grammar was a study for a class of six.

The girls received regular instructions in sewing and knitting; they worked in the dining room and kitchen so as to train them to manage their own homes properly. They washed their own clothes and took care of their sitting rooms and bed rooms. The ages of the girls varied from six years to twenty, and their complexions from that of the full Choctaw to that of the white man's child. Their government required a resort to nothing which "may not be strictly called mild means, and the positive application of such means has in no case failed to secure obedience."

Mr. Balentine considered that a favorable feature of the school was the fact that most of the large girls belonged to families where English was spoken; they knew little Choctaw and that gave the teachers an easier approach and those pupils helped to Anglicize the school: "The aim of the school is the elevation and improvement of its pupils in their domestic habits and social condition, in their intellectual development and acquirements, and in their moral and religious culture. How far these ends have been attained, can be learned fully only from the future history and destiny of those taught."

The 1857 report for Kooncha (Goodwater) was dated July 16 and Mr. Balentine stated that the forty-four girls who had been in attendance were selected by the trustees of the public schools of the Choctaw Nation. The expenses of the institution were met by an appropriation of three thousand dollars annually by the Choctaw Nation and the balance by the Presbyterian Board. The sum paid by the church was supposed to be five hundred dollars a year, but the amount actually paid was, on the average, more than five times the sum stated in the stipulations of the contract.

Kooncha (phonetic pronunciation of the Choctaw, Kusha) was opened on the first Wednesday in October, 1856, and closed on the first of June, 1857. Although this school was supposed to be a manual labor establishment, Balentine wrote that "the laboring department has not been conducted with as much efficiency during the past year as the best interests of the pupils would seem to demand. This was owing to the want of a sufficient number of qualified persons to take charge of this department."

9Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1856, pp. 159-60; Historical Sketches of the Missions Under the Care of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (Philadelphia, 1886), pp. 29, 30, 37, 38.
Three day students had been in regular attendance and more could have been brought into the school if the accommodations and teaching force had admitted of it. Lovell's and Goodrich's readers were being used and Willard's History of the United States. In closing his report Balentine wrote: "A kind Providence has protected the school during the year, and has bestowed upon it a more than ordinary measure of health and happiness, and has not at any time forsaken His servants."  

George Ainslie was the superintendent who made his report on Koonsha Seminary August 30, 1858, and he stated that the Reverend Hamilton Balentine and family left the mission on the eleventh of May: "His departure was deeply regretted by all, as his long experience and superior abilities rendered him eminently qualified for the important post he occupied."

C. H. Wilson, superintendent of Wapanucka Institute, on July 8, 1859 sent a long report of his school. He closed his account: "Rev. Hamilton Balentine (sic), who first had charge of this institution, will take my place for the next half year, and will probably make to you the semi-annual report in January, 1860. After that I hope to report to you from time to time."

Superintendent Balentine wrote Agent Cooper on July 6, 1860 that the Mission Board had decided to discontinue Wapanucka. The furniture, cattle, wagons and all other goods recently sent out by the Board, were to be sold at once. He notified Colonel (Jackson?) Kemp and Captain Alexander of the decision, and advised them to buy the furniture if they planned to continue the school. He promised to turn over the buildings to them as soon as possible, but in the meantime he would take every care of them.

On July 20, 1860, Hamilton Balentine made a report to Choctaw Agent Douglas H. Cooper, as "Superintendent pro tem. Wapanucka Institute." Nine months of school were held and 122 Chickasaw girls attended. The institution was divided into three separate schools according to the acquirements of the students; each was under the care and instruction of the same teacher. Balentine wrote a detailed description of each of the divisions, of the text books used and the number of pupils in each class. Three classes were held for the instruction in sewing, knitting, care of their rooms, and ironing their own clothes.

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10 Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1857, pp. 529, 530.
11 Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1859, p. 578.
13 Report Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1860, pp. 372-75.
Shortly after the War was over, the Reverend Hamilton Balentine, who had been for many years a missionary in this Territory, and citizen of the Cherokee Nation by adoption, came to this portion of the country and settled some seven miles from where Vinita now is, and began to preach; his labors soon grew into an organized Church known as Pheasant Hill.

The Reverend Amory Nelson Chamberlin and the Reverend Hamilton Balentine were active in the old church at Pheasant Hill, and they, with the Reverend W. P. Haworth, were instrumental in organizing the first Presbyterian Church at Vinita on October 8, 1883.14

A newspaper account by the Reverend Timothy Hill states:15

Not long after the formation of the Pheasant Hill church, the railroad was built, and Vinita came into view as a railroad town. Here Mr. Balentine came and preached, and soon held a regular service here, a Sabbath-school was organized and a prayer-meeting was held. These were the first religious services ever held in Vinita.

Mr. Balentine's labors extended over a wide region of country, as he preached at Pheasant Hill, Vinita, Landrum's school house, the Rogers' settlement and other places. In June, 1875, he removed to Park Hill and took charge of the Cherokee Female Seminary there, but his work was nearly done, as he finished his course and fell asleep in Jesus, February 21, 1876.

WILLIAM H. BALENTINE, THE SON

William H. Balentine, a son of the Reverend Hamilton Balentine and his wife Anna Hoyt Balentine, was born July 6, 1854. According to the Final Rolls of Citizens and Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes in Indian Territory Mr. Balentine was forty-eight years old when the Cherokee Roll was completed in 1902. He was listed as having one-eighth Cherokee blood.

In interview with Mr. Balentine he told that he was born at Wapanucka Academy. He gained his early education in contact with his highly educated father while living in various missions.

Mr. Balentine's mother, Anna Hoyt was a daughter of Milo Hoyt and Lydia Lowrey Hoyt, who was a daughter of Assistant

which was not quite so extensive as the measles . . . . and finally many of the children were prostrated with pneumonia . . . . and led to the returning home of a number of the pupils, who did not again return to the school. [Four girls died during the term.]

14 Lon H. Eakes, "Rev. Amory Nelson Chamberlin," Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XII, No. 1 (March, 1934), pp. 97, 99, 102. Chamberlin, also a grandson of the Rev. Azr Hoyt, was born at Brained Mission in 1821. He aided in Cherokee emigration to Arkansas and to the Indian Territory. He became a missionary and minister at Pheasant Hill, located in what is now Craig County, Oklahoma, seven miles northwest of Vinita. Pheasant Hill was named for an Indian of that name who once lived there.

15 The Cherokee Advocate, Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, April 18, 1884, p. 1, col. 7. This account is from a discourse delivered by Timothy Hill, D. D., at Vinita, Indian Territory, March 16, 1884. Copied from the St. Louis Evangelist.
Chief George Lowry of the Cherokee Nation. Her mother was Lucy Benge Lowry. At the age of sixteen she was baptised at Brainerd Mission on January 31, 1819. Her husband, Milo Hoyt had been a student at Princeton. Their second child was Anna Hoyt who became the wife of the Reverend Hamilton Balentine. The Balentines became the parents of three children: William Balentine who married (1st) Fannie Keys and (2nd) . . . . . Johnson; Hamilton Balentine who married Mary E. Keys; Jonathon Balentine who married Lizzie Foreman.16

In 1872, William H. Balentine attended Highland University for two years and finished his education at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri in 1876. He was not graduated owing to the death of his father. He was called to Tahlequah to take charge of the Cherokee Female Seminary in place of his father. That same year he made an extensive tour of the eastern part of the United States, visiting the Centennial in Philadelphia, the national capital, Niagara Falls and other celebrated places.

Mr. Balentine was married in 1878 to Miss Fannie Keys, a daughter of Chief Justice Riley Keys of the Cherokee Supreme Court. By this marriage he had three children—Fannie M., William H. (Junior), and Annie M. After the death of his wife in 1885 he married Mary D. Johnson, the daughter of Andrew Johnson of Flint District.

According to Mr. Balentine he taught school at Durdeen, White Oak, Pheasant Hill, Menard, Garfield and Eureka. He taught the Menard school for seven sessions.

The Balentine home south of Tahlequah was on historic ground. The garden plot was the site of Riley's Chapel where the Indian Mission Conference was organized and where the First Methodist Church in Muskogee came into existence.17

Mr. Balentine filled several important positions in the Cherokee government, starting with clerk of the senate committee of the

16 Muriel H. Wright, *Springplace, Moravian Mission and the Ward Family of the Cherokee Nation*, Guthrie, 1940, pp. 63, 64, 81, 94. The father of Milo Hoyt was the Reverend Ard Hoyt, a native of Danbury, Connecticut, who was born October 23, 1770, ordained at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, August 26, 1800, and served as pastor there until 1817 when he embarked from Philadelphia for Brainerd Mission, Tennessee. He arrived January 3, 1818 and served as superintendent of the mission until May 22, 1824, when he removed to Willstown Mission in Alabama, where he died on February 18, 1828. His wife was Esther Booth of Connecticut (Robert Sparks Walker, *Torchlights to the Cherokees*, New York, pp. 43, 134). (The surname of "Chief George Lowry," mentioned in the above paragraph is also found spelled in various records "Lowery" and "Lowrey." The first spelling "Lowery" is given as the preferred and correct form in family genealogical data which had been checked by the late Chief of the Cherokees, J. Bartley Milam of Claremore, and appears in *Springplace, Moravian Mission* . . . . [Wright, op. cit.].—Ed.)
National Council in 1879; he was secretary to Judge (Robert Wesley) Walker while he was superintendent of the Female Academy. He served two years on the board of trustees of the Insane Asylum.

"Mr. Balentine is a gentleman of more than ordinary education, and, intellectually, is far superior to the majority." He had a marvelous memory and the writer was fortunate to be present when he gave a long interview, sitting before the fireplace, in his home. A stenographer took notes and the following facts were gained from him:

"I knew Tom Starr better than I knew my Daddy. I had an uncle, Milo Hoyt, who served with Sam Starr during the (Civil) War. My uncle married Dave Folsom's daughter Serena and they had one child named Alphias whose Cherokee name was Squirrel. After the war my uncle settled on the south side of the Arkansas River in the Choctaw Nation, and Tom Starr settled on this side of the river, down in what is called Younger's Bend.

"Tom Starr would do anything in the world. Once he and his gang robbed Wat Grayson of $32,000 in cash. Tom Starr planned it but the others got the money. They went to Grayson’s home and when he would not tell where his money was hid they put his feet to the fire; and when he still refused to tell they put his wife’s feet to the fire. Grayson could not stand that and so he told them where the money was concealed. Wat Grayson was the father of Captain G. W. Grayson and he lived near Eufaula.

"I knew Belle Starr very well. Once the Starrs asked me to go with them to Muskogee. Tom Starr, Belle Starr, Aunt Katie Reece, Charley Reece’s daughter all went. They were going to sell some cattle and they wanted me to count the money. After they had sold the steers . . . . they were offered a check which they refused; they were offered green backs but Tom wouldn’t take anything but gold. When we got that we started home, with Aunt Katie driving the horses. By the time we got to Coodey’s Creek one of the horses was sick. Tom asked if I knew where I could get a horse and I told him I knew some of the Monroes and could get a horse from them.

"It was night and I told Tom I would go after a horse if he would go with me. He said all right but we had better make a fire for the women to keep them warm as the night was cold. We didn’t

18 Ibid., Mr. Ballentine died July 3, 1933.
19 "David Folsom, the first chief of the Choctaws elected by ballot. . . . History will record to David Folsom a high rank as a just and honest ruler, a noble patriot and an exemplary Christian. . . . he administered the national affairs of his people for thirty years. . . ." —H. B. Cushman, History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Natchez Indians (Greenville, Texas, 1899), p. 348. (The "Milo Hoyt" mentioned in the above paragraph was Milo Ard Hoyt, a son of Milo Hoyt, Sr. and Lydia Lowry Hoyt. He married Harriet Folsom Washburn according to the family genealogy given in Springplace, Moravian Mission. . . . [Wright, op. cit.]—Ed.)
have any matches and Tom said he could make a fire with dry sticks, but I took some gun powder from a shell, tore up some papers, and making a spark by striking the steel of my gun against a rock, set them on fire. Way in the night we got to the Monroe house. Bob Monroe came out and asked who it was. I told him my circumstances and that I needed a horse and he said for me to go to the stable and take one of his—Tom Starr would not come up close. I got the horse and we went back to the wagon.

"Right after the Civil War, Jesse and Frank James came in this country and after a while Cole Younger and his brothers joined them and they stayed around the Starr's home in the Younger's Bend. When they planned to rob the bank at Northfield, Minnesota, they came to get Jim Reed to go with them. He was married to Belle then, before she married Starr and she wouldn't let him go. She threatened to kill him rather than allow him to go . . . . Tom Starr refused to go because it was too far from home and they didn't know the people or the country.

"There was a thousand dollars reward out for Tom and Ellis Starr and they were on the scout. One day they saw a deer running around their camp. Tom said it was a bad sign and they had better move. Ellis refused to go, but Tom left and Ellis was killed. After killing a great many men Tom Starr died in his bed. He was nearly seven feet tall, had big feet and went bare foot in summer time . . . .

"My father was the first superintendent of the Cherokee Female Seminary after the Civil War. I was attending Westminster College at Fulton, Missouri when my father died, February 22, 1876. When I came back here after his death, Miss Florence Wilson, Lizzie Ross, and Lizzie Stapler were teaching in the Seminary where there were 150 girls. My mother taught music there.

"The Board of Education of the Cherokee Nation could not find any body else to take father's place so they asked me to stay. I wanted to go back to Westminster College but I finally consented and remained there through the balance of the term. Later I taught mathematics at the Cherokee Male Seminary in 1880. Aunt Eliza Alberty and her husband had charge of the Male Seminary at that time."

There was a large log house east of Mr. Balentine's home which he said Judge Riley Keys had built and then sold to the Carters "... Bill Keys who lived at the mouth of Park Hill Creek on the west side of the river died there." Mr. Balentine continued his narrative:

"It was an old-time custom that if any body died on a place they would move off, so they exchanged places with Judge Gillis. Bill Keyes' widow Sallie, had a brother Looney Riley who lived
to be ninety years of age. I bought this place in 1878. Judge Keyes said that Reverend Thomas Bertholf, a Methodist minister, built the first house in 1828, and Judge Keys built the second one two years later. He hewed the logs and made the boards. That old house is 105 years old and still occupied. Fifty years after Judge Keyes built it he helped me make a new foundation under it and it is there yet. I own it now."

In a letter addressed to Grant Foreman from Tahlequah on September 25, 1933, Mr. Balentine wrote:

My grandmother, Mrs. Lydia Hoyt, a daughter of Maj. George Lowrey (who for many years was Assistant Chief of the Cherokee tribe), was born in 1803, raised a large family and lived to a ripe old age; she spoke with equal correctness both the English and Cherokee language, was educated at Brainerd in the old Cherokee Nation; she translated and sang the first English hymn that was ever sung by the Cherokees . . . . In the fall of 1839, she lived about six miles south of Tahlequah . . . .

Then there was my father-in-law, Judge Riley Keyes, born in the old Cherokee Nation in 1803, emigrated in 1826, and was the second of a large family of sixteen children; was prominent in politics here for perhaps forty years having been elected as Supreme Judge several times; member of the Board of Education; he was a delegate to Washington together with William P. Ross and Jesse Bushyhead, son of Rev. Jesse Bushyhead, in 1867.

I also knew well Aunt Sally Keyes, she was a sister of the mother of Judge Riley Keyes and the widow of his uncle, William Keyes; she lived on the west side of the Illinois river, at the mouth of Barren Fork . . . . until her death in 1871, being about ninety years old.

I also knew her brother Looney Riley; he was elected from Cooweescoowee District to the Council in 1873, and at the time of his death was said to have been ninety six years old. In his first emigration to this country, he lived on Barren Fork near the present town of Welling . . . . Also I knew Aunt Susan Taylor, who lived in Tahlequah, built the National Hotel in 1847, and lived there until her death in the early '70s; she was the daughter of George Fields who was a half-brother of "Bushyhead," the father of the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead, so they were cousins . . . .

Mr. Balentine wrote that the feud caused by the treaty of 1835 was continued until the year 1845, when James Starr, a signer of the 1835 treaty, living in Flint District was murdered: "It is said that thirty two men surrounded his house, just about sun-rise on Sunday morning, and riddled his body with bullets, he was a good man, the father of twenty children; his two wives were sisters, and among his children was Tom Starr, the noted outlaw. After the war he lived south of Muskogee about twenty miles, where he died about thirty-five years ago . . . . Once when I was talking to him he said, 'You know there was thirty two men that slipped up and killed my daddy, well I got most all of them except just a few that got sick and died in a bed before I could get to them.'—that was his idea of justice."

Mr. Balentine wrote concerning the so-called "hanging tree" in Tahlequah:

After we came back from down south at the close of the Civil War, the old gallows was up a little ravine, perhaps half a mile south-west of the

20 Unfortunately this house later burned.
old Cherokee capital building, perhaps not so far as a half mile, and several
men were hung on it before the jail was built, there was A-ne-ta and Spade
Sunshine and others . . . . .

Archilla Smith was the son of Cabin Smith, the youngest child, his
wife was Agnes Fields, the daughter of John Fields, a brother to George
Fields, so she was a first cousin to the Susie Taylor above mentioned; then
Archilla Smith and his wife Agnes had six children, the oldest John Smith
married Margaret Hendricks—they had one child which died and they
separated and she married Andy Woodall, who was killed during the Civil
War near his home, and she died in her ninety-second year at the old
home, near the present “Woodall” school, which was named after them, about
eight miles south from Tahlequah. Rachel Smith married John Rider and
they had a number of children, most all girls I believe. Elizabeth Smith
married John McFerran Fields, they hanged him, then she married Thomas
Adkins and George Drum; she had no children and was generally known as
Aunt Lizzie Drum and lived near where the town of Gore is now located,
I knew her well. Two other sons, Charles and Samuel Houston Smith
died without issue and the youngest girl, Eliza Smith married David
Grason, Jackson Cozens and Francis Marion Seabolt, I didn’t know anything
about this family of Eliza Smith . . . . .

During a visit Mr. Balentine related to the author that when he
was a young man he was the owner of a fine young horse. On one
occasion he had ridden far into the country and was overtaken by
night so he stopped at the home of a friend who agreed to allow
him to remain. After supper the two men were sitting in front of
the fireplace visiting when there was a knock at the door; when it
was opened Tom Starr entered, and was invited to have a seat. Mr.
Balentine hoped that he would soon leave but he decided to stay
overnight. The result was that Mr. Balentine sat up all night to
guard his horse, because he knew if he went to sleep he would never
see the animal again, as “Old Tom” would make off with it.

\footnote{For an account of Archilla Smith see Grant Foreman, Indian Justice, (Okla-
homa City, 1938.)}