

In my SELF search I'm always finding something to be excited about and this is no exception. As a child I heard often from my Mom about how much she had admired Will Rogers (the Oklahoma humorist, turned movie star) and how sad she was when he died (the same year I was born) in 1935 in a plane crash in Alaska.

So, imagine my excitement when I found out that we have a connection through Presley SELF, a son of Job (or William Self). My Self line is through Spencer John SELF, a brother of Presley SELF. Will Roger's ancestry line comes through John Gunter, brother of Amy (or Amelia) Gunter who was the wife of Presley SELF. Amy and John were the children of John Gunter II, b: ca 1750 NC, d: 28 Aug 1835, Guntersville, Marshall Co., AL and Catherine, a Cherokee woman whose Indian name was Ghe-Go-He-Li, was the daughter of Chief Bushyhead. John and Catherine had a daughter named Elizabeth Hunt Gunter, b: Sep 1804, Guntersville, AL., d: 14 Feb 1877, Cooweescoowee Dist., Claremore, in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Elizabeth (Betsy) married Martin Matthew Schrimsher, 22 Sep 1831. Martin was born ca 1806 in Blount Co., TN., d: ca 1865 at Cooweescoowee Dist., Claremore, I.T. (OK). Their daughter Mary America Schrimsher was born 9 Oct 1839, at Tahlequah, I.T., OK, d: 28 May 1890, Oolagha, I.T. OK married Clement Vann Rogers, b: 11 Jan 1839, Going Snake Dist., I.T., OK, d: 28 Oct 1911. Of their eight children the youngest was William "Will" Penn Adair Rogers, b: 4 Nov 1879, Cooweescoowee Dist., I.T., d: 15 Aug 1935, Point Barrow, AK, in a plane crash along with Wiley Post.

Will Rogers was named for the distinguished Cherokee statesman, and good friend of his father Clement Vann, William Penn Adair. Will married Betty Blake 25 Nov 1908 in her parents home in Rogers, AR. They had four children, William Vann "Bill" Rogers, 3), was a successful actor and a Congressman., Mary Amelia Rogers (1913-1989), was a Broadway actress., James "Jim" Blake Rogers, (1915-2000), after starring in some cowboy movies as a young man, spent his life as a horse and cattle rancher., Fred Stone Rogers (1918-1920) died of diphtheria when he was two years old.

Will Rogers was first an Indian, a cowboy, then a national figure. He starred on Broadway, and in movies, was a popular broadcaster and wrote more than 4,000 newspaper columns. He was friend of Presidents, Senators and Kings and during his lifetime he traveled around the world three times. He wrote six books and was the first big time radio commentator, was a guest at the White House and his opinions were sought by the leaders of the world. His famous quote, "I never met a man I didn't like," was his motto and expressed the genuine love and respect for all people everywhere.

Of course I've been looking for that missing Indian SELF family, maybe I'm getting closer. At any rate I know my Mom would be thrilled!

Sources for information on Will Rogers can be found at www.willrogers.com/Genealogy, written by Pat Lowe, an archivist-librarian for the Will Rogers Memorial Commission of OK. And from "Will Rogers, The Man and His Times" by-Richard M. Ketchum, a book I bought my Mom over ten years ago.

Submitted by Shirley McMahan

a SELF researcher

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"Well, all I know is just what
I read in the papers."

