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TENNESSEANS FOUND IN THE INDIAN-PIONEER PAPERS OF OKLAHOMA

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The opening of the Oklahoma Territory in 1889 drew settlers from across the United States. Eager for free land and a fresh start, some of these new settlers journeyed from the state of Tennessee. These pioneers joined other Sooners and helped shape the heritage of early Oklahoma. During the 1930s, employees of the Works Progress Administration interviewed many of Oklahoma's old settlers and pioneers. The WPA hoped to collect and preserve narratives that would reveal the diversity of frontier life during and after settlement in Oklahoma. The narratives were then bound in a 113 volume set, entitled The Indian-Pioneer Papers.

Many of those interviewed discussed only basic information on their life in Tennessee before their move to Oklahoma. But some of the narratives provide helpful genealogical material, such as parents' names and places of birth, their chosen route to Oklahoma, and other places they may have lived after leaving Tennessee but before settling in Oklahoma. Several of the narratives give a more detailed account of the individual's life in Tennessee.

A complete set of the Indian-Pioneer Papers is housed in the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Libraries. The Collections welcome all researchers. Telephone and letter requests should be as specific as possible.

This compiled list of Oklahoma settlers includes only those persons born in Tennessee. Each entry gives the following information when available: name as recorded in the WPA interview, maiden name in parentheses, date of birth, and place of birth. The Indian-Pioneer Papers volume number and page number where the narrative can be found is also listed. Following the index of names are the full texts of several of the interviews.

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Patrick Henry Cameron

Interview with Patrick Henry Cameron
Sallisaw, Oklahoma
November 15, 1937

I have been in this country, or the Cherokee Nation, for fifty-three years for as I remember it, it was 1884 when I crossed the Arkansas River from Fort Smith, Arkansas. I was born [April 23,] 1854, and my birthplace is Peel Chestnut, Tennessee. I understand the place is called Smithville now. Peel Chestnut received its name from the fact that a very notable chestnut tree grew in the forks of the main roads running through that country; everybody knew that it was the largest chestnut tree in the state of Tennessee, and many people traveled many miles just to see this unusually large tree.

This chestnut tree became so famous that someone decided to open an eating place for the sight-seeing people. So many people carved pieces of wood for keepsakes off of that tree that the tree died, and then the bark died and began to peel off and that gave the place its name, "Peel Chestnut", Tennessee.

[My parents were Thomas J. Cameron and Sarah Marriah Hayes, both born in Peel Chestnut]. I left Tennessee in 1872 for Arkansas and stopped in Evening Shade, Arkansas, in Sharp County. I lived in Evening Shade for twelve years before I decided to enter the Indian Territory in 1884. I crossed the Arkansas River about ten o'clock on February 6, 1884, on a very crude ferryboat and paid the charge for myself and a team and wagon.

I immediately drove to a place on Little Sallisaw Creek of the name of Slate Ford. I received my first employment here at Slate Ford building a wagon and a house for Uncle Billie Kyle. I worked for him pretty steadily for about a year. I made a wagon for Uncle Billie and built the first lumber house in all that community, and finally one day I decided that I had better quit Uncle Billie Kyle, and I said, "Well Uncle Billie, how about settling up today?" He said, "Why, you don't owe me nothing do you?" I had to laugh, he looked

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so astonished because I wanted to settle up. I said, "Why, how about your owing me a little," and he said, "Well that ain't what you said: Why yes, Pat, I owe you all right; why ain't you said so long ago? How much money do you want?" I said, "Why Uncle Billie don't you know?" He said, "No, you are doing the work; it's your place to keep up with that part of it."

I just want to say right here, that the Cherokees expected perfect honesty and this Indian didn't dream of my beating him out of a dime. I said, "Uncle Billie you owe me an even \$80.00 tonight," and he walked off and did not say anymore and that evening he came back and paid me every penny of it.

I want to tell you a little more of that spirit of expecting honesty among the early Cherokees. In the years between 1885 and 1890 a full blood Cherokee of the name of Johnnie Childers was appointed postmaster of the first post office here in the Sallisaw community, but this office was located just about a mile and a quarter south of town here on the stage line, and I am sure it was the first post office between Fort Smith and Muskogee. The funny thing about the post office was the way it was run. The people would gather up hours before time for the stage coach to come and whittle and chew.

The Indian postmaster had a few groceries and some Star tobacco, etc., and when the stage coach would run up the driver would climb on top and throw the sacks of mail off on the ground and the boys would grab a pouch apiece and then would make a scramble for the door to beat one another to the key to unlock the locks hanging on each pouch. The key hung in the corner of the room used for a post office and as each boy got the key he would unlock his sack and then get on top of a large heavy square table in the middle of the room and empty out the mail on this table just like shaking cotton out of a picking sack and when all the mail was piled on this table the postmaster would walk up and say, "Well boys, I thank you for helping me, but you must stand back now while I let the older folks hunt for their mail. Come on you older folks now and see for yourself if you have a letter or something, now stand back you children." So it was in those days; everybody expected everybody else to be honest and especially to tell the truth.

After a year or two of this going on, this postmaster, who drank a great deal, was staggering around the post office when the United States Marshal rode up and got down and I think he had a man or two with him. He went in and said, "Well, Uncle Johnnie Childers, are you drunk?" And Uncle Johnnie said, "Why yes, did you expect me to lie to you?" and they took him to Fort Smith under a Federal charge of transporting whiskey across the Indian Territory line. So I made it my business to be at the court on the day of his trial, and finally the United States Marshal and other witnesses got through telling their damaging stories. All at once his lawyer told the court that Mr. Childers wanted to testify, so Uncle Johnnie got up there and Federal Judge Parker said, "I want to talk to this Indian myself first. Mr. Childers did you say you didn't import this whiskey?" Uncle Johnnie said, "I don't know the 'port of it but I got whiskey." "Say you did it." "Yes, you bet I did it. Ha! Ha! Ha!" (all over the court house). "How much whiskey did you get?" Uncle Johnnie sat

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there a long time because he didn't understand about measurements and he didn't know how to tell it. Finally Judge Parker asked him to try to tell it or he could have an interpreter. After a while Uncle Johnnie blurted out, "Bout three hundred barrels, guess so," and the Judge had to laugh out. The Judge said, "I will decide tomorrow what the sentence shall be on this confession."

Next day Judge Parker sentenced that Indian to \$1.00 fine and one day in jail. Uncle Johnnie paid a \$1.00 bill and the United States Marshal led him down by the jail and took him on to the depot and put him on the stage for his home.

Going back to the way that Indian ran that United States post office, I want to tell you about how Uncle Johnnie kept his money. He had a toy trunk under his bed and he decided to show me how he kept this supply of money one day, and I helped him count it and the best I can remember we counted pretty nearly \$500.00 and he wasn't a bit afraid of getting robbed, and the best I remember that was before any robbing got started in the Cherokee Nation. I fully believe that all that rough stuff was taught those Indians by some mean white men who drifted into this Indian Territory to hide from the law back in their own states.

Everything went by stage coach around here until 1888; then Arkansas Valley Railroad completed their road into this country. The railroad depot went up and several eating shacks sprang up all around here, then a few grocery stores began to open up, and all this surely put money in my pocket, inasmuch as I was a recognized builder and I got my part of the hammer and saw music.

It was not very long after this that the Government took this post office away from Johnnie Childers and named Charley Fry to the job of postmaster and moved the post office up near the railroad, and I got to build the building that housed this new post office and the new postmaster, and then I remember everybody had to wait to be given their mail instead of people helping themselves at the big table as before.

The first real general store in Sallisaw was opened up by men from Fort Smith of the names of Futrell and Jennings. The best friends I ever had or knew in those old days were Mr. Charles Fry and Mr. Tobe Usrey.

A man by the name of Henry McDonald got very wealthy on the early day boom in Sallisaw; at one time he was known to be worth \$300,000.00. Then, I am sorry to say, he made some very poor investments and went broke. The preacher was Jim McDonald who was one of the early day ministers and is worthy of mention. He gave his whole life to uplift the morals of the people of this eastern part of Oklahoma. He was beloved by the Indians and by all the whites who knew him.

When I came here in 1884 the ground where this town is now located was a sort of a prairie where grass grew higher than any man's head and wild turkeys and wolves were

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everywhere. I could go in any direction from here and kill anything I wanted from a rabbit to a deer, inside of two hours.

I will soon be eighty-four years old and I am sorry to know that all those good old days of plenty, and freedom with it, are gone forever. I am six feet six inches tall and have dark blue eyes and I weigh two hundred pounds. I never was in court a day in my life for misconduct of any kind, and I organized the first Sunday School that was ever established in the eastern part of the Cherokee Nation the latter part of 1884, at Shiloh, Indian community, east of Sallisaw, near what is now Gans.

Henry Alec Davis

Interview with Henry Alec Davis
706 South Gresham Street
El Reno, OK
February 17, 1938

Henry Alec Davis was born in Weakley County, Tennessee, January 8, 1866, a son of Mark Miliam Davis and Sallie (Barr) Davis, [both born in Weakley County]. His father was a Civil War veteran having served three years during the last period of the war and was a wood-workman by trade, spending much of time in his little log work shop building looms, wagons, spinning wheels, and bedsteads.

When a lad of ten years, Henry hauled wood with a team of Tennessee steers to his father's home-made wooden molasses mill. His father had also a grist-mill which was run by waterpower where he ground corn and flour for the settlers. Henry's father did the grinding only as the farmers brought in the grain and waited while it was made into meal and flour for the family needs. These small mills ground the grain into a form suitable for the home consumption and were not manufacturing enterprises. They ground more corn than wheat, and Henry's father charged a toll ranging from one-sixth to one-twelfth of the grain. Other millers ground the patrons' grist for sums of 25 to 35 cents a bushel. In the former case the customer got all the bran and shorts which his share of the grist made. In custom grinding a man was expected to place his grist at the hopper and take his meal sacks to a spot where they were filled. Mr. Davis later established what was known as an exchange mill where he exchanged flour for wheat. They usually received thirty-two to thirty-five pounds of flour for each bushel of wheat.

Army overcoats left over from the Civil War were prominent and comfortable articles of wear for some years following the war. Boots when obtainable were purchased a size or two too big in order to allow for shrinkage when they were wet. Since many people did not have the money to buy boots, shoes were sometimes made by tacking leather "uppers" to wooden soles, and children shod with these shoes, clacked across the bare wood floors of houses and schools like a troop of cavalry.

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All the clothing for the Davis family was made at home. Men's trousers were made of duck, jeans, or denim. Their shirts were of hickory, blue or checkered. This family kept a few sheep and made homespun jeans for the two boys and linsey dresses for the five girls in the Davis family. This homespun cloth was usually dyed from walnut or other natural dye made of barks, gathered in the woods. A suit of homespun would last a year.

When Henry Davis' mother was quite busy at nights spinning cloth and the children did something mischievous, Mrs. Davis would place each child on the floor near her, give him or her a bunch of cotton and tell the children that before they could go to bed, they each had to pick every seed from their bunch of cotton. If a child went to sleep on the job, Mrs. Davis quickly tapped him or her with a hickory and told that child to get to work.

In the fall of 1877 Henry Davis's father sold his holdings in Tennessee, as his brother, Henry's uncle, had come to the Indian Territory during the Civil War and this had made the Davis family anxious to leave the old home for the Promised Land and as preparations were made, there were days and weeks of delightful dreams of the new home where life would take on a new meaning. Henry's parents lived in imagination on the frontier where land was very plentiful and opportunity beckoned to all. The Davis family arrived in the Territory on November 8, 1877. This family came on the M.K.&T. Railroad, the only railroad in the Territory at this time, and located on Lynn Creek, near Pencee in what is now known as Chickasha.

Pencee consisted of two or three stores and eight or ten families in and around it. At this time there was no market for agricultural products more than their own needs except at a few places along the trails so during the first winter in the Territory, the Davis family hunted and also trapped furs for a livelihood, they traveled here and there always locating near a creek or river where game was very abundant.

In the spring of 1878 Henry Davis' father purchased one hundred head of steers from his brother paying him \$10.00 a head for these steers and early in the summer Mr. Davis slowly started grazing this herd of cattle up the Chisholm Trail and as he traveled along he purchased more cattle, meanwhile, the family lived in a half dugout which was located about two miles north of Pencee.

Henry was just a lad of twelve years of age at this time. All his life he had wanted to be a cowboy, and before his father departed Henry had begged his father to let him go along and help herd the cattle, but his father flatly refused to do this, saying Henry was too young and was needed at home with his mother. One of the mother's greatest trials was remaining alone with her five small children in the isolated dugout for weeks and even months while her husband herded their cattle to the market.

The danger of Indian attacks was ever present and every object seen approaching their hut was looked upon with fear. At such a time a visit from a stranger was unwelcome.

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One time Mr. Davis had been away from home for several months, provisions for the family were running low and one day as Mrs. Davis looked out she saw an ox team approaching. The driver, a powerful man, got out and carried a quarter of fresh deer meat to the Davis dugout. In answer to this man's inquiry as to whether Mrs. Davis would like some meat she replied, that they needed it but that her husband was away and had left her no money. This man replied, "Oh that's all right, we have more meat than we know what to do with," and left the meat. It was some years before the Davis family learned the identity of the hunter.

After Mr. Davis' departure in 1878, a friend of the family, Ed Parrish, came along looking for work as a cowboy. Soon young Henry had made plans to go with him in search of work. Their first work was for the Circle G Cattle Company owned by Jul and Jot Gunter, twin brothers, whose ranch was located in west Texas. Their first work with this outfit was in helping to move their cattle from west Texas to what is now Caddo County. The Gunter brothers had secured a beef contract to supply the Kiowa and Comanche Indians with beef which was issued by the Government; they also furnished beef for the soldiers at Fort Sill and also at Fort Reno, and a few heads of beef were sent to the beef issues at Darlington for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians. After young Henry had worked a month and collected his \$20.00 wages, he at once purchased a pair of high heeled boots and a ten gallon hat and borrowed a pistol from his friend, Ed Parrish, and after he secured these things he thought he was a grown man, at thirteen years of age, and a real cowboy. He was called "The Kid" by the many cowboys who worked for the Circle G Outfit and all his life he has been known as "The Kid" to his many friends.

In the spring of 1879 Henry made his first trip up the old Chisholm Trail and they aroused a herd of twenty-five hundred cattle from their bedding ground on the morning of April 3, 1879. In this outfit were fourteen cowboys, the cook who had charge of the chuck wagon and the horse wrangler whose duty it was to care for the forty horses. They slowly traveled with these cattle grazing them as they went, and when they reached the market at Caldwell, Kansas, the cattle were fat and in good shape for shipping. During these trips the cowboys encountered many hardships, such as prairie fires, storms, blizzards and Indians. They had to swim raging rivers, undergo cattle stampedes and many had to work two or three days and nights in a downpour of rain without any sleep. During these storms and rainy spells Mr. Davis would vow that he would quit the life of a cowboy when they reached their destination, but just as soon as the sun came out and the birds began to sing he wouldn't have traded places with a king.

The cowboys never had much trouble with the Indians; when they came upon a group of Indians who demanded beef they always picked out one or two "drags" and gave them to the Indians. Usually on a trip like this they gave the Indians about fifteen head of cattle, but if you didn't give them a beef they would slip around at night when the herd was bedded down for night and cause the herd to get stampeded and in some of these stampedes as many as fifty head were lost.

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The cowboys naturally caused some trouble in the drowsy little towns and their vicinity for after having sold their stock at the markets, they usually put on a spree and determined that everyone in the vicinity should celebrate. Those who did not want to drink were obliged to hide. Sometimes a cowboy crazed with drink would go wild and shoot up the town. Oftentimes it was a trying task for the foreman to get his cowboys rounded up and started down the trail toward the ranch.

Henry Davis worked as a cowboy on this ranch for thirteen years or until 1891, when he and a man of the name of Albert Green took to traveling as horse traders and also engaged in horse racing. In the days before the automobile, horse trading and horse swappers existed everywhere. They usually started out about the last of April or the first of May, when the weather grew warm and there was grass for the animals. The first law with a horse trader was always to get something "to boot." It was said no men were honest when trading horses. They always owned two or three good horses, and when they made a town to trade horses, before they left they usually managed a horse race. Someone always got up a race between two horses which were thought to be fast. Each horse had its backers. Usually the horses were from different towns and the local people showed loyalty to the horse from their town. Sometimes such a race would be arranged on the spot and the whole town would close their stores and go out to a smooth spot on the prairie to watch the race. The three judges lined up with tree or post or even the end of a wagon or some other available object. The starting was by the "ask and answer" - - "Ready?" "Yes" "Go" or by the "lap and tap," where the horses were walked, trained to whirl and break quickly. Often an assistant led the horse by the bit to keep the spirited animal from whirling too soon in spite of the rider. The riders, having turned, rode toward the line, attempting to keep even as they crossed the starting line. If this was the case (that is, if they were in lap) the judge tapped them off. The distance was short, usually from a quarter of a mile to a mile. Henry Davis generally bet from \$25.00 to \$100.00 and sometimes he won and sometimes he lost.

In 1898, he married Sallie Belt; they had one child, a girl; in 1899 he moved to Arkansas for his wife's health and in order that she could be near her parents. In the winter of 1899 Sallie Belt died and was buried in Pullman, Arkansas. In 1900, Mr. Davis married the second time; his wife was Norah Starr, a girl whom he had known from a child. They are the parents of three children: two boys and one girl.

Mr. Davis speaks the Comanche language and was well acquainted with Quanah Parker. Mr. Davis has had many experiences with the Kiowa and Comanche Indians and many times while passing along the road he would stop his team, seeing an Indian with a broken plow who did not know how to fix it and Mr. Davis would help the Indian fix his plow and also show him how to plant certain kinds of vegetables so that he has many Indians friends as well as white. Mr. Davis's name is enrolled among the pioneers of Oklahoma of which he feels very proud.

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Allen D. Edgmon

Interview with Allen D. Edgmon
March 16, 1938

I was born, of white parentage, in Rome [Roane?] County, Tennessee, October 30, 1850, and am now 87 years old. My parents [William Edgmon and Martha Detridge, both born in Tennessee] were of a prominent family and operated a large plantation with many slaves. As I grew up during the Civil War, I did not have an opportunity to secure an education, but have been active in church work all of my life. I am a descendent of Irish, white Dutch, and French.

I made many pairs of shoes, tanning the leather to make them. We took the raw hide, getting the hair off with lime, and putting it in the tan bath with oak bark ooze, where we let it stay about twelve months.

Our farming consisted of raising wheat, corn, oats and flax. We raised flax to make our clothes. We wove and colored or dyed our clothes; we raised indigo to dye with, and also dyed with bark, blackberry root and red sumac tops. We used black walnut hulls to color wool with. Copperas and alum, to mix with dye, were gotten out of bluffs from rocks of limestone. Of course we wore home-made clothes.

We did our cooking at the fire-place or out of doors; baked our corn bread in skillet and lid and stewed other foods in dinner pots. We had wooden wash bowls and water bucket and our spoons were made of cedar. We had a bread tray made of buckeye white wood.

When cultivating corn, we had long bull-tongue plows, and ran three to four times in one furrow. We had to thrash our wheat with billy clubs, on a floor, or ride a horse over it to tramp it up, and take a fan mill to blow the chaff out. Later came the thrashing machine, commonly known as the Groundhog Thrasher, operated by horse-power. The first double shovel I ever used was made of wood, with wooden beam.

We kept our fires burning all winter long as there were not matches in those days. In summer time, when no fire was needed only for cooking purpose, the women folks took large barks of wood and covered over the coals and put ashes over them for slow burning until needed. How we obtained or made fire: We first took flint rock and a pocket knife, poured some black powder on the ground and lay cotton by it, then struck flint for sparks on powder to set the fire. When we were out of black powder we would take copperas string and turn the spinning wheel so fast it would set the copperas string afire and then get pine or paper to get our fire going.

We came from Tennessee to Arkansas, in an ox wagon, our journey lasting six weeks. We crossed the Tennessee River two times in flat boats and we crossed the Mississippi one

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time, below the mouth of the Ohio, at Columbus, on a flat boat. The steam ferry boats were sunk after we crossed the Mississippi. We went seventy-five miles up the river to get across the Nigger Wolfe swamp, into Missouri, then cut across the corner of Missouri back into Arkansas. We had our household goods in the wagon and cap-and-ball rifle, and muzzle-loading shot gun.

After we settled in this country there was plenty of wild game. We had our corn ground on water mills run by a fifty foot wheel and fifty foot fall. The burrs were made of French rock.

I have eight children living, my oldest child being sixty-five years old. I have lived to see the fifth generation. I have over one hundred grandchildren. My wife's maiden name was Susie Sparks. We were married in Newton County, Arkansas, some sixty-six years ago. Susie Sparks was born in Rome [Roane?] County, Tennessee, October 26, 1853, and left Tennessee when she was six years old to move to Arkansas.

I have operated spinning wheels and looms. We used three treadles to make men's clothes, and for dress goods, I would weave 6 yards. I used four shuttles weaving plain clothes. I could weave ten yards a day with one shuttle.

We came to Cherokee County in Green Community, about 45 years ago, being the first white family to settle in that Indian Community.

My father was a Confederate soldier and served in the Civil War. He saw lots of real battle action, and was wounded at Chickamauga but died later. He is buried at Nashville, Tennessee.

Governor Chiggley of the Chickasaw Nation and I were hunting partners and hunted all over where Oklahoma City now stands. We once were attacked by Comanche Indians and Governor Chiggley killed one. He would take in every orphan child who came along, Indian and Whites and provide a good home for them.

I am a life-long Democrat.

Robert E. Lee Good

Interview with Robert E. Lee Good
712 South Main
Hobart, OK
March 23, 1938

I was born in Tennessee, May 27, 1859; son of Edward Good and Delila Allison Good. I do not remember the native state of either of my parents as my early memories

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were occupied by the struggles of the people of Tennessee in the times following the Civil War to secure a living for themselves and to recover from its havoc. My father did not serve in the Army, but I had two brothers who served in the Confederate Army, one of whom died in service.

My parents were very industrious and reared their family to be the same, as well as religious. We were Methodists of the old type. We lived on a farm and my father also did carpenter work. All farming was done with walking-plows and cotton and corn were dropped by hand. My father made our shoes out of leather which we tanned in a vat at home, all by hand. We made our own harness of this leather, also made our own chairs and all other furniture, such as tables, chairs and bedsteads, from hickory wood.

Mother and my sisters spun the thread and wove the cloth and made all our clothing by hand. Boys as well as girls were taught to knit and I have knit many pairs of mittens and suspenders; these were knitted in strips, crossed in the back and stiched by hand, then button holes were made in each end to be fastened to the buttons on our breeches as our jean trousers were then called. The buttons were cut out of horn or some other such substance.

We had an ash-hopper in the yard where white ashes, from hickory usually, were poured and into this was poured water, the drippings of which were lye with which we made our own soap from the fat of hogs raised at home.

We made our pails, churns and tubs at home of cedar wood, held in what we called a horse made for the purpose and with a drawing-knife we shaved each piece down to a perfect joint, with a bottom to fit. Then the staves were bound together with wooden hoops; we later used brass hoops. The wooden dasher was made at home and I was a grown man before I ever saw a stone jar or churn.

We were careful to see that the fire in the fireplace did not go out either winter or summer, for there were no matches. By banking the ashes over them the coals were kept alive but if it should go out we would have to go to a neighbor and borrow a chunk of fire for a start.

A piece of flint rock, a steel and a piece of punk were usually kept with which to start a fire but it was not always easy to strike fire with the flint. Punk was to be found in rotten logs, but if it happened to be damp it took a long time to dry; therefore, it was much easier to hunt a burning log heap or go borrow from a neighbor a half-mile or such a matter away.

Our winter clothing was made from wool grown on our own sheep, sheared, washed, and made ready for spinning by us boys. The spinning and weaving were done on our own spinning wheel and cloth loom.

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The cotton seeds were picked out of the cotton by hand as I never saw a cotton gin until after I was a grown man.

My sister, Jennie, married Frank Cernelison and they moved to the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, in the early 1880's where living conditions were very similar to those which I have just described.

On February 28, 1886, I arrived in Marietta, now in Love County, by train, fresh from Tennessee. Marietta then had only wooden buildings scattered along what was called a street which was a wagon road with board sidewalks in front of the stores which, the best I remember, were two dry good stores, two grocery stores, three stores that sold general merchandise, two livery stables, some blacksmith shops and one cotton gin.

My sister and brother-in-law lived four miles east of Lebanon, now in Marshall County, on an Indian lease. They met me at the train and we went across the country in a wagon over roads that were simply wagon ruts, following the smoothest ground we could find as there was no such thing known as a section line. There were not many white settlers living near them, but the Chickasaw Indians were very peaceable and well-behaved, except when someone would go across Red River to Dexter, in Cook County, Texas, and bring back whiskey. Then the Indians, as well as a great number of white people, would get drunk and as a usual thing somebody would get killed.

Lebanon had at that time two general mercantile stores, a drug store, two blacksmith shops, a small schoolhouse which was also used for a church; all of which were built of native lumber. There were among the people some as good citizens, both Indians and whites, as could be found anywhere, but there were also many bad characters evading the law in the States.

The Keel Family, Chickasaws, had much land and property; one of the boys was a bad man when drunk. Charley Burns was the United States deputy marshal and when this Keel boy got drunk and began to shoot things up Marshal Burns did his best to stop him, but could not and, as he was trying to kill some other people, Burns shot him through the arm and thereby disabled him. He said, "I ought to kill you but I will not do it. Maybe this will teach you some sense." Keel contracted blood poisoning in the wound and died.

I had witnessed the shooting and went to the funeral which was the first Indian funeral I ever attended. They placed the body in a home-made wooden coffin and with it placed the boy's clothing and all kinds of things which had belonged to him, including his gun. To my amazement they also put in a little poke of coffee for him to use on his way to the Happy Hunting Ground. Then they hauled the coffin in a wagon to an old cemetery in the country and after placing the coffin in another home-made wooden box, placed it in a grave and buried it with a ceremony, all in Chickasaw, that I could not understand.

The woods were full of wild deer and turkeys and we did not need ammunition to

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capture them for food. The first wild game I ate after I came to the Chickasaw Nation was a turkey which I had gotten just like we did in Tennessee. I found where the turkeys roosted and made a trap by placing a stout string in a loop on the top of some small sticks driven in the ground. Inside this loop, I placed a trigger baited with corn on the top. To the trigger was fastened the other end of the string that had the loop in it and this went up over the tree. The turkey in this case was a fine big gobbler and when he pecked down on the trigger the loop caught him around the neck and jerked him high into the tree where I soon came to get him for my first wild turkey dinner in the Chickasaw Nation. Wild turkeys were also caught in bunches by digging a ditch from near the brush fence surrounding a corn field to a covered pen several feet inside. In the bottom of the ditch was strewn shelled corn leading in to the covered pen which had a small opening at the bottom. The turkeys would follow the line of corn, picking it up until all were in the pen then they never looked down to find the way out again, but were caught in the trap.

For many years nobody thought of raising turkeys because there were so many wild ones, but later there came turkey peddlers into the country after the wild turkeys were killed out. It was the same with wild hogs; as long as the country was open and they were used for food of the settlers, they were plentiful, but when it was settled up and some people took more than belonged to them, wild game disappeared. I remained in the Chickasaw Nation and later married. My wife's parents were Isaac and Bettie Evans and her name was Maggie. The Evans family came to the Chickasaw Nation from Tennessee in the early 1880's and settled near Lebanon, also.

I have lived in Oklahoma fifty-two years, this past February, and am now living in Hobart. I find making a living much more difficult than it was under conditions in the early days.

W. H. Jackson

Interview with W. H. Jackson
Tishomingo, OK
March 24, 1937

Mr. W. H. Jackson, better known as Judge Jackson, was born in Ray [Rhea] County, Tennessee, April 3, 1852. He came to this country from Tennessee November 1870. He is a white man, intermarried with Indian woman. His people were Tennessee born and they would not leave their native state.

Mr. W. H. Jackson served in the Chickasaw tribe for 13 years, holding different offices. He was attorney general for Chickasaws, judge of the Chickasaws, and served in the legislature. He was the first white man to serve as sheriff of the Chickasaws and the second white man ever elected as Attorney General of the Chickasaws by popular vote of the Indians. He had charge of the Indian schools for ten years, five years at Rock Academy

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and five years at Colen Institute.

Bromide, in the old days, was called Salt Springs, because the Indians thought the springs contained salt. They would go there and drink the water for rheumatism. Then Mr. W. H. Jackson sent a sample of this water to Toronto, Canada, for analysis, and the water was found to contain Bromide and other chemicals beneficial to health, but very little salt. The town Bromide derives its name from the springs. Mr. Jackson is the father of Bromide, Oklahoma. He practically paid for the railroad, then called M. O. and G. now the K. O. and G., just to get it out to his watering place.

Mr. W. H. Jackson was the founder of the manganese mine (iron ore). The mine located seven miles north of Bromide, was the first mine ever developed in the state of Oklahoma. Mr. Jackson sent a sample of this ore to Toronto, Canada, and the analysis proved to be fifty-six percent manganese ore, but after spending much money in developing this mine, there was not a large enough vein to justify the manufacture of it. He did send it out in small quantities to other places.

Mr. W. H. Jackson founded the post office at Viola, Oklahoma. It was called the star route. This post office was named after his oldest daughter, Viola, the wife of H. H. Burris today.

Mr. Jackson made use of an expensive overshot water wheel to develop power. He said it was the largest wheel of its kind west of the Mississippi River at the time he bought it.

This is one of the legends of the people, handed down from generation to generation. In the old days when one of their people died, the Indians would string him up and let the flesh dry off the bones; then they would take the bones down, wash them and when the people moved to better hunting grounds, they would carry the bones. This duty was assigned to the old women, the ones that were too old to do anything else.

When one of the family would die the Indians would often bury them under the floor for safekeeping and to have them close to them. If too many of the same family died, the Indians would leave this place for they thought it was the evil spirits that were causing all these deaths. Not all of the Indians were of that faith.

In the past it was the custom of the Indian men to wear their hair long. If a white man inter-married into the Indian race and he wanted to be recognized as one of them, he let his hair grow as the Indian men did. Judge Jackson told me that in those days he had long hair.

Judge Jackson told me when he first came to this country he worked for fifty-cents a day for Governor R. M. Harris' father when salt pork was twenty-five cents a pound and green coffee twenty-five cents a pound. He had the right attitude toward making a success

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of his life. As time went on he gradually made better wages. Then he branched out for himself, and he made much money, but spent much of this in the development of this country. He is a very interesting character, and is active for his age.

Mr. Jackson is writing a book of his life and the pioneer days and customs of this territory. He told me he planned to write a part in a kind of "believe it or not" form and have the facts to bear him out in these statements. He also said he had the dates and facts that he felt would be of interest to the generations to come.

Mr. Jackson has the pioneer spirit about him today and is very much concerned about the careless way this generation is destroying the trees and other things of beauty and use. He is a very thoughtful man and has the interest of humanity at heart. I asked him of many details which he choose not to discuss, because they would be found in his "Own Book."

Ann McDonel

Interview with Ann McDonel
Kingfisher, OK
February 10, 1938

I was born in 1868, at Memphis, Tennessee, and lived there until my parents decided to make the trip to the opening of Oklahoma. They, with twenty or twenty-five other families made the trip from Memphis, Tennessee, on the train and arrived in Kingfisher on April 22, 1889, the same day as the opening of Old Oklahoma. We had a long, very inconvenient trip; there were about four car loads of us colored folks, as well as I remember and we had the train all by ourselves, as there were no white people allowed on that train. Each family had several hundred dollars to use, and we thought we were rich. When we arrived in Kingfisher there were two grocery stores already established for emergency use. Everything was priced very high, but we wanted to make a good impression on the people who were already at Kingfisher, so we decided to buy all the groceries these two stores had on hand and this we did. Of course, it did not make any difference who the groceryman sold his goods to, he was in that kind of business and we did not think of our diets. We rented a huge barn to live in and there were about eight families below and six upstairs in this barn, so you can see how much room we had to keep house. All our cooking was done out on camp fires on a vacant lot; the fires were made in small trenches so that even a can lid might be used to cook in. We had no kettles; we used gallon fruit cans, old cans or about anything, just to have a little something to eat. Potatoes were baked in the ashes, also acorns were baked this way, which we ate plenty of to keep from going hungry, for we had to eat anything to keep from starving after the first few weeks we were here and our money had run out. We did not get any homesteads and we had to rent a place to stay or get out so we had to earn some money. I worked for a Mrs. Mitchel who

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ran a hotel at the time for my board and fifty cents a day. The place we rented to live on was covered with prairie dogs, so wasn't a very pleasant place.

I have not been away from Kingfisher more than two times since I arrived and have watched it grow from two stores to many and from a prairie dog town to our town, which has been a very interesting event.

Mary Elizabeth Morris

Interview with Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Morris
Masonic Home for Aged
Guthrie, OK
March 1938

I was born [July 4], 1855, in Eastern Tennessee where the Cherokee Indians had formerly lived. Most of them had left there before my time, some going to Arkansas. A road made by the Cherokees when they migrated was called "Notchy Trace Road." My mother [Margaret Norton, born in Tennessee] was one sixteenth Cherokee but my father [Andrew Dodd, born in North Carolina] was German, and he did not want my sister and me to associate with the Indians or learn their ways.

I married when just barely fourteen and my husband was not yet eighteen, and I was a mother before my fifteenth birthday. We had thirteen children, but only five are living.

There was a mound on my grandfather Norton's place in Tennessee. They told me that a battle between the Indians and the whites was fought there. We used to pick up arrowheads there.

My mother, sister and I each got a hundred and thirty acres of land in Western Tennessee. The state gave each Indian that much land. All we had to do was to camp over night on the piece of land we selected, and go to the county seat the next day and get our papers on it. About two years after I was married my father died, and Mother always lived with us after that.

My husband persuaded me to sell my land in Tennessee and move West. He said that we would buy land in Texas. We spent one year in Texas but never did buy any land anywhere. My husband liked to move about and was never satisfied very long in one place. He was a fine man, and good to all of us, just as good to my mother as he could be, but I did get tired of moving about.

We came to Oklahoma from Texas, crossing a ferry north of Sherman, in 1889. We first settled in the Chickasaw Nation. Mother had never slept out in her life and we worried about taking her over into the Territory, but she enjoyed it.

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Mother is buried at Nichol Hill, or Balm as we called it the, about fifteen miles north of Ardmore. Two of my children and a daughter-in-law are also buried there in an Indian graveyard. John Thomas, a Chickasaw Indian, took an interest in this burial ground but after his death it was neglected. My son went there about a year ago and he told me that he couldn't locate our graves any more. There were no stones or markers that I remember. Red-bud trees grew among the graves and Mother thought it looked so pretty when they were in bloom that she asked us to bury here there. I do not know the legal description of this land.

We leased from the Indians, and moved about a lot. We went to Konawa in Seminole Country when there were only tents there. The railroad (MK&T) had just gone through there and a townsite had been laid off. There were grocery stores, dry goods stores and a post office, all in tents. We lived there three years in a tent, while my husband and our oldest boy did carpenter work. There was plenty of it to do there and we made a good living. Then Mr. Morris leased some land from a full blood Seminole woman, and we moved out there - - three miles east of Konawa (which means "String of Beads").

This woman's name was Malinda Curtain. She lived in a little house on a hill about a hundred yards from us. There were two little log cabins for us to live in. There was a space between them and my husband built another room, connecting the two. Then he built a good two-story frame house and dug a well, which was the rental charge agreed upon for the five year lease.

There was a burial ground in our front yard. There were about twenty graves, and the end of the burial plot came to the corner of my kitchen. I did not want to move there on account of these graves. Fruit trees grew among the graves and bore fruit, but the children and I would not eat any of it.

Not long before we moved there, "Aunt Linda" as we called her, had lost her husband. She never missed one day in the five years we were there, going to his grave just before sunrise and mourning there. She built a little house over the grave and brought all of his clothes and hung them about the walls on nails. I did not always see her but I could hear her praying and mourning, and knew she was there. She could not speak a word of English but I learned to talk Seminole. Whenever she had any business to attend to with white people, she would ask me to go with her and interpret.

While we were there, two or three children were buried there in our yard, so we got to observe Seminole burial customs at close range. They had a burial ceremony about like ours with the minister in charge. The night after the burial the Seminoles would come to the grave and mourn. They did not cry as we do, but kind of moaned. These Indians did not eat anything at their "cries" but fasted and moaned all night. They thought the soul could reach the Happy Hunting Ground in three days, so they kept a fire burning near the grave for three nights to frighten the devil away so he could not get the soul. A plate of food, enough to last three days, was placed on the bare chest of the corpse when it was

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buried so it would not lack food on the journey. On the night of the third day after burial they had another big "cry" that lasted all night. Just before the burial a bottle of perfume was poured all over the body.

This old Indian woman was tender-hearted. My daughter had twins while we lived there, but both died at birth. When she heard of it "Aunt Linda" came down and moaned and prayed over them for a long time. When she cooked anything special she always brought me some of it.

There was a Baptist Mission at Sasakwa, the next town east, and we attended services there many times. Usually the missionary would have a short sermon in English for us white people, then would preach in Seminole for the Indians. There was always something to eat, and we were all expected to eat it. The Indians would be offended if we refused. Sometimes we had just boiled beef, but usually Pashofa or cracked wheat or corn cooked and mixed with meat. Each person had his own cup and dipped out what he wanted, eating it directly from the cup without a spoon. I used to can fruit for the Indian women in my neighborhood, as they did not understand canning.

After my husband died at Tulsa, I went back to Konawa where we had lived about twenty years, and I worked in a hotel for several years.

One day I met "Aunt Linda" on the street. She put her arms around my neck and kissed me. She said, "I'll never see you again. I'm going to die soon. I wish you were living in the house on my place again. I miss you."

I never saw Aunt Linda again, and do not know who owns her place now, or whether the burial place in the yard among the fruit trees can still be found or not. It was three miles east of Konawa, in the southwest corner of Seminole County.

I worked in Oklahoma City for seven years. Then I became partly paralyzed and could not work any longer, so came here. My five children visit me often, and I am quite content and happy here. I will be eighty-three on the 4th of July.

Though I am part Cherokee, I never lived among the Cherokees. All my experiences with Indians were with Chickasaws, Choctaws, Seminoles and Creeks.

Mrs. Cherokee America Morgan Rogers

Interview with Andrew L. Rogers
Fort Gibson, OK
July 13, 1937

Mrs. Rogers, the daughter of Gideon and Margaret Sevier Rogers, was born at

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Citico, Monroe County, East Tennessee, December 15, 1830. She grew to young womanhood there and received her education at Knoxville, Tennessee.

On December 20, 1849, she was married to Andrew Louis Rogers at the home of her sister, Mrs. Hugh McDonald McElreath, at Calhoun, Tennessee by Reverend A. A. Mathias. Mrs. Rogers was a descendant of two of the most noted families of Tennessee whose names have been woven in the history of the state for many generations. She was a first cousin to the famous John H. Morgan, familiarly known in Civil War days as "Morgan, The Raider." From the Morgan family she inherited her intrepid spirit that enabled her during the vicissitudes of after life to conquer obstacles that arose in her pathway. From the Sevier family she got her Cherokee blood, her patience and endurance.

Her husband's parents, Connell and Anne Dugan Rogers, were married in Rutland County, Ireland, in 1798. They emigrated to the United States and settled in West Moreland County, Pennsylvania in 1817, where Andrew L. Rogers was born. Later, following the trend of westward emigration, they moved to Putman County, Ohio. Mr. Rogers' mother lived to the age of one hundred and one years and died of injuries sustained when a team hitched to a carriage ran over her.

Mrs. Cherokee Rogers lived at Citico after her marriage until the beginning of the Civil War. After they were raided several times by the Northern Army, they moved to Calhoun, Tennessee, but had lost almost all their possessions. One night the Northern Army in a raid took all the horses they possessed, among them was a fine horse that had been given Mrs. Rogers by her cousin, General John H. Morgan, who had been taken prisoner and confined in a Northern prison at Columbus, Ohio. General Morgan managed to make his escape from the prison and made his way through the lines until he reached the Southern Army. On returning home he gave Mrs. Rogers the fine horse he was riding that had been supplied him by his southern friends. The next morning after the horses had been taken Mrs. Rogers told her husband she was going over to the Northern camp and get a horse. She went, and told the officer in charge what she came for. As she looked very much in earnest, he told her she might take one horse and to make her selection. She took John H, as they called the horse, named in honor of his former owner. She said, "No Yankee has ridden this horse yet, and never will." As the War had left them almost destitute of property when in 1871 a representative of the Cherokee government went to Tennessee and other states to induce all those of Cherokee blood to move to the Indian Territory, Mr. Rogers decided that opportunities in the West would be better for their fast growing family consisting of five boys and two girls. They were given free transportation for themselves and household goods by the Cherokee government. Among their few household possessions was a fine piano which Mrs. Rogers brought along.

The M.K.&T. Railroad had been built through the Territory that year and Gibson Station was the Terminal. They were met there by her sister's son. Her sister was Mrs. Eblin (formerly Mrs. McElreath) who had lived in the Territory for some years. It was dark when they reached the Grand River which they had to cross in a ferry boat and the

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boat had been tied up for the night. As the ferryman refused to take them across the river, Mrs. Rogers said, "There are enough of us to run the boat," so they untied the boat and drove on. The ferryman then agreed to take them over. They stayed at the home of Mrs. Eblin for a time, then rented a farm nearby. Then they bought a small farm from Mr. F. H. Nash, a Fort Gibson merchant, who afterward became their son-in-law. They named the place "The Jungle" as it was in a dense woods. There they lived for three years, and Mr. Rogers, who had been crippled from a knee injury, died there in 1875 at the age of fifty-seven.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Rogers wanted a location with more land available. She then bought a claim from Mr. Nash on the east bank of the Arkansas River, where the Electric Power Plant now stands. They occupied a small house on the claim until they could build a more commodious one. There was only a small field in cultivation and the land was covered with heavy timber and a dense canebrake. The task at hand was to get the land cleared and put in cultivation. With her own energetic sons and the help of the neighbor men they went at what seemed a gigantic undertaking.

As was the custom of the Indian to help each other, her neighbors told her to have "a-working" and all able-bodied men for miles around came. They would work all day cutting timber, rolling logs to be burned, selecting the best from which to make rails, and clearing away the underbrush. They used an ox team to haul the logs. A big dinner was always served in the middle of the day. The occasion always closed with a dance and supper at night. One of the boys would take the farm wagon and gather up the girls in the neighborhood for the dance. It was a happy, peaceable crowd of young folks that danced long past midnight to music furnished by a neighborhood fiddler. As Mrs. Rogers was a Presbyterian in faith and by membership, her pastor, Reverend Stoddard, reprimanded her for allowing her young folks to indulge in such worldly amusements. She said, "I can't pray those stumps and logs out of that field, I'm just going to dance them out."

While her young sons were busy in the fields she was occupied with the task of grubbing the canebrakes out of the yard with a hatchet. When the time came that they were ready to build a larger house the boys hauled the lumber from the nearest sawmill eighteen miles beyond Tahlequah. The new house was a story and a half structure with four rooms below and two above, a long front porch and a back porch around the ell. In their new home Mrs. Rogers delighted to entertain their many friends and relatives and it was a treat, indeed, to partake of her gracious hospitality.

As Mrs. Rogers' sons possessed the same energy and business acumen as their mother, they were not long in accumulating property. They combined stock-raising with their farming activities. When the eldest son, Connell, married Miss Florence Nash, he made his home near his mother. In connection with their farming and stock-raising the boys contracted with cattlemen to feed beef cattle through the Winter and prepare them for Spring market. One Winter 1,000 head of beef steers belonging to Mr. Nip Blackstone were fed there.

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As Mrs. Rogers possessed more energy than it seemed possible for one little woman weighing less than one hundred pounds to have, she insisted on working in the fields with her boys. Holding a conference among themselves they decided that when she came out to work in the field they would stop. On finding out what it was all about, she agreed to confine her efforts to the vegetable garden and the house. By no means was all her energy directed to material things. Having secured a splendid classical education in her early days, she did not neglect to add to her store of knowledge that kept in touch with everything that made for a cultural life. She possessed a marvelous memory and was a great reader. It was her delight, at the close of the day, around a cheerful wood fire to read to her children, always selecting the best in literature. She was a lover of Shakespeare, Scott and Burns.

Mrs. Rogers often entertained her boys while they worked in the field by telling them stories. One day while they were working she was telling them the story of Damon and Pythias and she said, "Boys, keep your eye on the corn field, don't look up so much; if a flock of angels should fly over, I will tell you." Just then the dog ran after a squirrel, the boys following in close pursuit. On coming back one said, "Now, Mother, go on with the stories," but she replied, "I won't finish it, I won't tell stories to boys who run off to chase squirrels."

Notwithstanding the hardships incident to pioneer life, Mrs. Rogers maintained her fine spirit and never varied from her ideas and ideals of right. She implanted in her children a deep sense of integrity and fair dealing, and the word of her son was as good as his bond. In 1905 they erected a large modern house on the same location. Before the allotment of Indian land they owned and cultivated three hundred acres of fine river bottom land. It had been a long way from the little cabin home and the four and a half acre field, where the intrepid little woman had settled on the banks of the Arkansas River. One of the outstanding features of the family life was that they held all of their property in common having only one bank account. No question of unfair dealing among them ever arose. The Rogers boys were the pioneers in potato growing as a commercial enterprise. They also were the first to plant alfalfa in this section of the country.

Not only did Mrs. Rogers attend to the needs of her own eight children, but was called upon to give aid to the sick and needy throughout the community. When "Aunt Chock" as she was affectionately called by all her relatives and friends passed on to the "Happy hunting grounds" on March 18, 1919, not only did her family sustain a great loss, but the entire community as well. Truly, the pioneers of the Indian Territory were not all men.

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SETTLERS AND THEIR SOD HOUSE, WESTERN OKLAHOMA TERRITORY,
1890.

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