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EVA WALKER, CHEROKEE

INTERVIEWED BY: J. W. TYNER

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GENERAL SUBJECT: INDIAN HILLSIDE MISSION

Of the many church organizations doing missionary work among the Indians in the 1880's, the New England Quakers did much to offer educational facilities to Indian children in that day. One of these was the Hillside Mission established in 1882. Eva Walker was one of the children who then attended this Mission, in the extreme western part of the Coo-wee-scoo-wee District of the Cherokee Nation.

Mrs. Walker was born near Oologah and has spent all of her life in this community. In addition to attending school at Hillside Mission, she also attended school at Oologah, and later went to the Cherokee Female Seminary, at Tahlequah.

The Reverend George Lloyd, a Quaker missionary, visited the Indian Territory in 1877 and saw the need for educational and religious work among the Indian children of this frontier country. He dreamed of establishing a mission for this work and shared this hope with a fellow minister, Rev. John Murdock of Arkansas. Reverend Lloyd died before their plans could become a reality.

Reverend Murdock went on with the plans, and with the help of the Cherokees of the area built the first mission school about two miles north of present Skiatook on Bird Creek in 1882. This was a one room log building. This location was used about three years before moving to higher ground about a mile northwest. The first location proved undesirable, mainly because of the humid hot air in the creek bottom and the hordes of mosquitoes.

The new location was on the side of a hill, and the Mission was so-called, Hillside Indian Mission. However, it had also been known by other names, but none ever were officially used. These names were Skiatook Mission, Friends Indian School, the New Quaker Indian Mission.

Before building the new school, the Cherokee Nation gave a contract to the Quakers with the clause that on it's discontinuance of the property, it would revert back to the Cherokee Nation.

The new mission school was completed in 1885. It was a large three-story building. At first the first floor was used for classrooms. The second floor contained the office; superintendent's quarters, kitchen, dining room, and rooms for the boys who boarded there. The third floor contained the women's teachers quarters, library, study room, music room, and girls dormitory. A few years later two more classrooms were added to the ground floor.