

METHA WATERS COLLINS, HER STORY (SCHOOL AND CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES)

Thursday, October 23, 1969. I am Metha Waters Collins. I was born September 13, 1901. My mother was Mary Gives Waters Le Clair, a Ponca Indian. My father was Pete Barnaby, a Ponca-Iowa. We were all allotted lands in the Ponca reservation. My grandfather and grandmother were George and Lizzie Roy Gives Waters. On my paternal side were Batiste Barnaby and my grandmother I knew only as old lady Little Snake. I wanted to tell about myself and a little of my schooling before I started my work.

One day my mother was sewing a pretty dress and underskirt. Then we all went to Tonkawa, a small town northwest of our home and they bought me new shoes and stockings. In the days going by I was told that I was going to a place where there were a lot of little girls and boys and they my cousins, aunts and uncles would be there with me and that I was going to learn the white man's way of talking and I was to learn their songs and to read and write them, and because all of my younger relatives were there and my mother and foster father Alec Le Clair did such a good job of encouraging me that I was all smiles, thrilled and glad that I was going to be among them. And I was just so glad that all them pretty clothes were put on me. Mother put my hair in two braids. She also had made two strands of small beads strung together and tied eight dimes on these hair beads and tied them on my hair. The dimes jingled every time my head was turned. I was overjoyed to know that this must be something special to be prepared for.

Well, the day came when the horses were stopped at the white picket fence which was on the north and east side of the school. I didn't know the directions but found out later. Sure enough there comes my Aunt Jerdie and my Uncle Albert and cousins galore. Of course, being noon hour and mother had a full meal of home cooking we spread canvas down by the picket fence and ate. But the size of the building and all it stood for gave me other feelings of uncertainty, fear started, all the talking going on among all of them I didn't know who to listen to. In