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Chickasaw Nation
Ranch Home
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Cyrus Harris

Form A-(S-149)

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson.This report made on (date) August 25, 1937. 193Name Mrs. Celeste Cabby Leal.Post Office Address Wynnewood, Oklahoma.Residence address (or location) General Delivery.DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 30 Year 1882.Place of birth Indian Territory, Chickasaw Nation.Name of Father Perry Froman Place of birth Illinois.Other information about father Deceased.Name of Mother Levina Colbert. Place of birth xOther information about mother Deceased.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4.

Maurice Anderson,
Field Worker.

An Interview With Celeste Leal,
Wynnewood, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1882 about a mile and a half west of where Wynnewood, Oklahoma, is now.

My mother was part Chickasaw Indian. I have heard her tell about the Indians. She said that the Chickasaw Indians who came from Mississippi in the early days were well educated and were large slave owners. Each girl in a family whose father owned slaves, had a slave girl of her own to wait on her. I don't remember hearing my mother say when she came to the Indian Territory but it was before she married my father. She had been married before, and her first husband had died.

My father, a young man at that time, settled in this part of the country, and started a ranch near where Sulphur, Oklahoma is now. He met and married my mother.

The ranch house was an upright log house; instead of laying the logs on top of the other, horizontally, they were stood upright, side by side. His ranch was the Diamond Z Ranch, but our home was west of Wynnewood, and father divided his time between our home and the ranch, so I don't know much about how the cattle ranch was operated.

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My mother has said in the early days that the Western Indians were their main trouble. The Comanches and Kiowas would make raids, stealing and driving off the cattle and horses.

One evening a bunch of them were going to make a raid in this part of the country, so that night a number of people gathered at our home and waited for the Indians to come. She owned most of the horses in this part of the country. Along about midnight, they heard a noise at the corral, but by the time they could all get outside, the Indians had started off with her horses. A small horse, her favorite, was in the bunch. She always rode it, As they were chasing the Indians to recover the horses, the Indians shot this little horse full of arrows and killed it because it could not travel as fast as the big horses. Instead of going on and leaving it, they were savage enough to kill anything they couldn't take. Killing her favorite hurt her more than it did losing the rest of the herd.

I have heard my mother speak of old Cherokee Town, In the early days it was a shipping point on the stage line that came through there, and was a trading post.

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The government issued beef to the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache Indians in a camp there on the prairie and along the Washita river. The mail would come from Gaddo to Cherokee Town on the stage and would be delivered to Fort Arbuckle on horseback. So in the early days old Cherokee Town was a transfer station for mail coming in for Fort Arbuckle.

I was a large girl before I saw an orange; we children in the early days were lucky if we got some candy on Christmas day.

We didn't have schools then like we do now; there were a few schools. A girl's Boarding School was at Whitehead, before the branch of the railroad from Pauls Valley was built by there.

I have heard Mother say that peddlers would come through this part of the country selling things. Several times she has paid a five dollar gold piece for enough calico dress material to make one dress. Governor Harris of the Chickasaw Nation was banker and guardian for lots of people. I knew several Indian women who took their gold to Governor Harris to keep for them. When a child

was left an orphan it was turned over to Governor Harris.

He would find a home for it and sometimes kept it himself.

It has been said Governor Harris ran a boarding house at Mill Creek. He did in a way, but it was free for anybody coming through that part of the country. They were always welcome, were well fed and given a bed if they stayed all night. But he did not charge for room and meals. Strangers were welcome to stay without cost.

There were very few church houses in my young days. After Wynnewood started building up we had a church house and a school.