

Interview with Minnie Traut  
North McAlester, Oklahoma

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I was born twelve miles south of Kiowa, in the year of 1888.

My parents were John and Mary Ann Schultz. They were both buried near the little place where I was born.

My father was principally a farmer; he came to the Indian Territory for the purpose of farming.

My parents and two other brothers and sisters had come to the Choctaw Nation and located at Sulphur Springs and what was later known as Stringtown. I was born at Stringtown.

In connection with my father's farm work he was also a carpenter. He built our double log house with a fire place at one end and a chimney and back chimney. Mother did all of her cooking and baking over the fire place.

When father first moved to Sulphur Springs, or what is now Stringtown, it was necessary to drive to Doggy Depot, twenty miles away, to the nearest store.

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At this time cattle were being driven from Texas to the northern markets located at Chetopa, and Baxter Springs, Kansas. There were no railroads in Texas by which to ship their cattle so the cattle men had to drive them through. They would graze them in the Territory and they would reach the market in good condition. Father had been told that the stages and wagons had difficulty in getting along the road on account of the many herds of cattle.

This little town of Stringtown was given its name by a stranger passing through on the stage. His name was never known.

The first store erected in Stringtown was built by two Confederate captains, Watkins and Blawie. They also bought and sold lots of cattle.

The Indians would drive their cattle in and sell them for merchandiss. They also would bring venison hams and sell them at very low cost.

If you could speak the language of these Indians they would stay a week in your home.

There was lots of wild turkey, hogs, cattle and ponies roaming the woods. It was a very easy matter

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to drive in a wild cow and tame her and have all the milk and butter you needed.

The first school-house that was built was located near the old springs. The building is still standing and in fair condition. The school was also used for a church. We had slab seats to sit on and used the Blue Back Speller. Half of the pupils were Choctaws with a few Chickasaws.