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Field Worker: Nannie Lee Burns  
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STORY OF EVA SPICER WHITETREE NICHOLS  
(Seneca Indian)  
107 A SE,  
Miami, Oklahoma

BORN In 1869  
Near Tiff City, Mo.

PARENTS Father, Dan Spicer  
Mother, Malinda Spicer  
(Senecas)

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Eva Spicer Whitetree Nichols (Seneca Indian) was born in 1869 when the papaws were ripe near Tiff City, Mo. Her parents were Dan and Malinda Spicer (Senecas). I do not know where or when they were born or when or how they came to Indian Territory and the only clue I have is a remark made by my grandmother who said one day that they traveled many days in a bark canoe which had a top or cover supported by poles.

#### MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD.

I remember going with my parents to Council Hollow in the month of December when the snow was thick on the ground to attend the White Dog Dance and also the Shuck Dance. We camped in tents with great fires built in front of the tents and in the long log house where the dance was held. This building was ~~roofed~~ and had holes through the roof for the smoke to go through. The best white dog that could be found was killed and fastened to a pole or tree on a high spot and for three days, day and night, dances were held in the long house, both

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men and women taking part in the dance. The fourth day the Shuck Dance was held. At this the men, I remember, wore braids of shucks around their heads and carried a branch with many shucks fastened to it, which they used in some gestures. This ceremony, I think, was giving thanks.

## MEDICINE MAN.

Our medicine was herbs and barks prepared for the various ills. Wild cherry bark was boiled and the syrup was taken and maple syrup from the maple tree added; this was boiled together and down and used for colds. The wild plum bark was used the same way and also used for colds. Each spring and fall the medicine Man would come to each home and go from room to room of the house shaking his turtle rattle and repeating cantations to drive out sickness and disease from that home. You could hear him coming for a mile through the woods as he wore sleigh bells fastened around his lower leg. I was afraid of him, and I remember him called Wooden Face and that his face was ugly.

## CLOTHES.

Many of the men wore, at my earliest recollection, the breech cloth and leggins, some fringed and some trimmed with a sort of ribbon fringe. Some wore buckskinsuits and some of the women's dresses were of buckskin, mostly made one piece.

## WILD GAME..

Wild game was plentiful. For meat we had the deer, wild hog, coon, wild turkey, and prairie chicken. Squirrels and quails were plentiful, but seldom used for food. The hunter who killed the wild hog had to be careful to kill the animal for if only wounded he would attack and fight. The men used a rifle that carried a round bullet and used a rod to place it some way. When a mess of fish was wanted, the men cut a long grape vine, and men, taking hold of each end, waded down the stream with it and this held the fish and when they reached the end of pool or body of water, they chose the fish that they wanted and threw the rest back into the stream. So we only took what we wanted for food and did not destroy.

## CROPS.

My father raised much Indian corn, which is different from the corn of today, as the grain is softer and flatter at the end. This was white, some little red, some spotted and some blue. The blue was used to make hominy. The white was carried to the mill and made into meal. These mills were located on some stream and run by the flowing water. Buckwheat was raised and this insured that the bees would make us plenty of honey for the winter. The wheat was cut by hand and heaped on an open clean spot and flailed by hand with long sticks. These crops together with what other things we raised in smaller

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quantities, and the wild fruits and berries and so forth went far toward supplying our winter supply. We did not can things in those days but dried most things that we put away.

Twice a year my father would take the team of ponies and go to Neosho, Mo., and bring home a supply of sugar, coffee, and the things that we could not prepare, together with what clothing, ammunition, and things needed. Money for these supplies came mostly through payments which as I remember were about \$50.00 twice a year.

#### OXEN.

We had four yoke of oxen which were used to farm but seldom used for driving any distance as they traveled so slow and were harder than the ponies to drive. However, I remember once, my father did drive them and was returning from Fort Scott and, when they neared Spring River near Baxter Springs, they smelled the water so they had to unhitch them and let them go to the river to drink; for when they were thirsty and smelled water, they would go straight to it regardless of ditches or anything and would possibly turn the wagon over, so they just unhitched and let them go and after they drank brought them back and rehitched them and come on home.

#### PLASTER.

Once my father, needing plaster for the home, built a big fire with a heap of logs and on this he piled large limestone rocks and kept this fire going till the rocks cracked

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and became soft and after they had been beaten to a pulp, he added sand that had been brought from the river, mixed with water and added some hog hair and the plaster was ready for use.

#### POCKET BOOKS.

Have you ever noticed that the pocket books that the ladies carry have a fringe and sometimes the end of the fringe is tipped with jingly things. Why this, you say. If anyone picks up your pocket book, it makes noise, and you hear it.

#### AMUSEMENTS.

Besides our various dances, Games of Cross Stick Ball were played. Each player had a certain mark or color so in the playing they could be distinguished and the object of the game was to put the ball through the goal at the opposite end from where they started. The players were divided into two sides facing their goal. Nine players on each side. Indian Football was played by both the men and women, the men playing against the women.

But much of our amusement came from horse-racing. We had a track at the old stomp ground on the Cowskin (Elk) river. The Beach-seed game was always looked forward to each summer and often lasted a week. The tribe is divided into two clans. My father belonged to the Wolf Clan and took

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the boys with him on the south side. My mother was a Turtle and the girls went with her on the north side. The seeds were filed smooth and one side is left the light natural color and the other side is stained brown and in the game these seeds are thrown like dice. (Here Mrs. Nichols requested that I let another member of her tribe describe the game to me.) I attended school at the Wyandotte Mission.

## MARRIAGE.

In May 1883, I married Frank Whitetree, a Shawnee (he was called an Expense Shawnee). We were married by Dr. Cook, Superintendent at the Wyandotte Mission, and went to live near the mouth of Cowskin river. He was a musician and taught the Splitlog Band. These players had the same instruments that are used today. We had three children, Susie, Scott and Frank Jr. My husband died January 16, 1902, and I left the place and went to live at my father's. We had always chilled on the River. On June 17, 1907, I married Alex Nichols, who lived just southeast of Turkeyford, and had one child, Nettie, by him. His chief interest was Horse racing and Threshing machines. He was often away from home with his horses at different places and I helped him, and I think today I could order any part of a threshing machine from a catalogue. He passed on a few years ago and today I live with my daughter, Nettie, who is a student at the Business College here.

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## OLD LANDMARKS.

The old log long house was destroyed when some white people bought the place. There is nothing left to mark the site; also the old race track and stomp grounds are now in cultivation. About old cemeteries, there was one on Cowakin on the Old Snow Young, later John Snow, place and this I think contains no markers. However, I would ask Mrs. Logan as her husband is buried there. My parents are buried at the mouth of Sycamore on the George Spicer place. I haven't been there for a long time. The old Wyandotte Cemetery was west of the present town and near the site of the old Agency and Mission. I am told that a man by the name of Hollis bought this land and had all the markers and stones piled up, and ploughed it up, saying he didn't have any use for it.

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