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Field Worker
June 9, 1937

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Interview with Margaret Oakes
Born 1854. Doakville, Indian Territory
Father-Calvin Ervin
Mother-Sally Gibson

Mrs. Margaret Oakes is the daughter of Calvin Ervin, a white man, and Sally Gibson Ervin, not quite a full-blood Choctaw Indian (also of French blood). Her parents were married in Mississippi, and, to quote her, "Emigrated to this God-forsaken country" when the other Indians were brought here about 1833 or '34. The father, a native of North Carolina, had taught school in Mississippi. Sally Gibson went to school to him, and when they began moving the Indians to this country, they got married and came out here with her family. He engaged in carpenter work out here, and was rebuilding Old Spencer Academy, when Mrs. Oakes got married. There were several buildings and they had been torn down by soldiers in time of the war. They had camped in them and as nearly demolished them as they could without burning them to the ground. So the father took a contract to rebuild them, and took his family up there and resided till he had the work completed. It took him a year or more. They were large two story buildings, and the rest of them were frame. "I remember,"

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Mrs. Oakes said, "there were a lot of skeletons, bones, and skulls in one of them. We were told that that was the medical department, and these skulls, bones, etc., might have been used in classes. I knew that we children were scared to death to go near that particular building after night. I was sixteen years old, then."

Father and mother first settled a place about four miles northwest of old Doaksville. That was our home, mother died there and was buried in the garden. No tombstone was ever put over her grave.

I went to school some, to neighborhood schools; then to Pine Ridge Academy. It was not a boarding school when I went there. It had gotten broken up in time of the war.

"I remember," resumed Mrs. Oakes, "when all west and northwest of old Doaksville was a vast rolling prairie. One could see for miles. Now they tell me that that is timbered country. There were a few red clay hills around Doaksville proper."

Margaret Ervin was one of the youngest children of the family, a little past sixteen when she married Thomas E. Oakes (brother to Lem W., Joel E., and S. L.)

Oakes). They were married at the old Methodist church ground on Rock Creek, northwest of what is called Spencer-ville now. "That was where old Spencer Academy was being built by my father. A protracted meeting had been going on and at the close of it we got married and stayed up there at my father's home about two weeks. Then we came on over here and settled at Atlas. Twelve children were born to us. Four died very young, five are living now, Mrs. Howard Morris, that is Sue; Mrs. Rosa Huff; Dan, and Ed Oakes, all of Soper, Oklahoma; Thomas of Dallas, Texas.

"My husband surely did like to dance, and we would go to dances. Finally, we had been to a dance when our second child was a baby, and we got to talking it over and decided that folks who were raising a family should settle down. So that was our last dance, we quit and both joined the Presbyterian church.

"Thomas E. Oakes lived to be 82 years old, had all of his teeth, and they were sound and he was getting his second sight(I can see better now without my glasses). As the children married off and left us, lots of folks tried to get him to break up our home out there in the country and move to town. 'Never,' said he, 'till they take me feet foremost,' and," she continued, "that is the way he went."

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"He said that he wanted to stay where he could be raising things as long as he lived. Thomas E. Oakes always tried to raise twice as much produce, garden vegetables and hogs, as his family would raise; because, he said, there were always unfortunates, who didn't have so much and would be glad to get some of the things he raised. Sometimes they would work for foodstuffs, but if they could not work, they never left Tom Oakes' house empty-handed. We raised just everything that was good to eat.

"In addition to our twelve children, we never turned away an orphan. We partly raised several. Then we gave our children all the education they would take. When they finished in our neighborhood schools, we sent them to colleges. The girls went to New Hope, and O. P. C. at Durant and the boys went to Spencer, Stillwater, and Muskogee. We sent them to colleges as long as they would go, and always gave them their choice of going and finishing college or settling down and marrying. They all preferred to marry, and not finish college. We even sent some of them to Missouri and some to Sherman, just any-

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where they preferred to go, because we wanted to make refined men and women of them. One daughter, Mary, who died two years after she married C. L. Harris, was especially refined. She and Sue went to Mary Conner College in Paris, Texas.

"The Oakes were usually buried at the Oakes family burial plot at Old Goodwater, but Thomas preferred to be buried at Soper. He died and was buried at Soper, in January 1928, and just in the fall before that expressed a wish to be buried at Soper. He was about one eighth Choctaw Indian.

He was County Judge of Kiamichi County, perhaps more than once.

The father of Mrs. Margaret Oakes, Calvin Ervin, was a white man from North Carolina, later from Mississippi, and he kept what he called a history of this country, of happenings here from time to time. Just written with pencil. The family would never give that up, but will permit it to be copied. It is now in the possession of Clarence Willis, at McAlester. He is now a banker there.

In Mrs. Oakes' home is a little old home-made hickory chair, with a cowhide bottom. She said that it ^{was} made before she married, and that all her children learned to walk by that chair.

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Mrs. Oakes said that Spencer Academy was moved from Spencerville to Atlas, because of the convenience of the railroad. Long years ago, supplies were shipped up Red river to Frogville, then freighted by ox wagons to Spencer, up in old Cedar County. The buildings were not moved, only the school. It was rebuilt in 1870, and ran on there for several years. Possibly ten or twelve years, though that is printed history somewhere. This writer knows that some of the old buildings were standing in 1900, though not in use at that time.

Calvin Ervin re-married after Sally Gibson Ervin died, and moved to Hartshorne, where he died and was buried there. This writer does not know whom he married or when.