

FENDER, BEULAH EATON

INTERVIEW

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Interviewer, Effie S. Jackson,
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Interview with Beulah Eaton Pender,
115 S. Olympia Street,
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My father came to Indian Territory and leased a farm of bottom land, lying between Hominy and Bird Creek. This was about a half a mile west of where State Highway No. 11 crosses Hominy Creek today. My father returned to Elk City, Kansas, for us. We had loaded three over-jet covered wagons with our belongings. The heaviest furniture we had put in the wagon to be hauled by the ox team. The other wagons had mule teams. We took our walnut bureaus with their marble tops. I remember the large side board we had, it took three of us just to lift the marble top alone.

We raised staple products on our farm which was good bottom land. My father was successful with another product--tobacco. He liked good tobacco and started raising it for himself and he soon found others liked it, both Indian and white, so he developed quite a trade for it. I often helped him prepare the ground.

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First, the brush on the ground had to be burned, this was to destroy the worms. Then we scattered the seeds somewhat far apart so that we did not have to move the plants. Then as fast as the large leaves reached maturity we gathered them, twisted them together and hung them up to dry. This made tobacco twists which sold for five or ten cents a twist, according to the size. The secret of tobacco culture was not only ground cultivation but the tobacco must mature and be picked before the frost. There is an old belief that "frosted tobacco is poison."

I remember building our home; it was actually hand made. My father and brothers cut down the oak trees from our own land and used oxen to drag them to the saw mill near Hominy Falls and there they were made into rough, native lumber. There was an old log house on the place where we lived while we were building our home. We built a two-story house of this native lumber; made our own clapboards for the roof. We sawed tree trunks about three feet high and used them as a foundation. The house was in bottom land and needed protection from flood. In fact, that house would be standing yet if it had not been for constant flood inroads.

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Until late years when we have had flood control, the Delaware, Bird Creek and Hominy Creek districts have suffered from annual floods. In fact, children could not go to the Greenwood school south of Hominy Creek due to flood danger. There were about fourteen children in the district where I lived who were shut in by these three creeks in the vicinity of Horse Shoe Lake. These children needed the "three R's"--some of them were fourteen years old and could not read nor write. There was an old deserted box-house made of native lumber near Horse Shoe Lake. When I was sixteen years old I began to teach these marooned children in this box school house. There was no setup or financing; everything was on a primitive basis. The farmers in the vicinity who wished their children to go to school gathered to cut down logs, then hewed them roughly and set them on stakes in long rows for the desks. Other logs on shorter stakes were the seats. As for me a large dry goods box was my desk and a smaller one served me as a chair. Then out from every storage space possible came all kinds of books. I really feel that those youngsters from five to fourteen years old worked hard and appreciated their slight opportunity.

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I conducted this school forty-two years ago. It was the day of "barter economy" in paying the teacher. One father brought a sack of meal, another a pig, chickens, sorghum molasses, in fact, everything "from money to red roosters." The school was held for four months in the spring and summer of the year.

I had other experiences in this mixed Osage-Cherokee white area. Thousands of acres in the Hominy, Bird Creek and Delaware regions were held as ranches by a very powerful white French-Osage woman, called "Aunt Jane" Appleby.

Aunt Janes Appleby had been in the early days the wife of the French-Osage trader, Augustus Captaine. They had one son, Peter, mentally weak; a daughter, Rosa who had married Alfred Hoopte; a daughter who married Cyrus Ririe and another daughter who married Green Yeargin, a well known post-rider. Aunt Jane and her married daughters controlled a vast amount of land. She had a fine stone house and a large ranch house and on each of the children's ranches was a similar stone house of nine rooms. These houses are standing today. Aunt Jane married Lew Appleby, one of her cowboys, after Augustus Captaine's death. After this marriage her children deserted her;

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in a way they felt that she had lowered her standards. The Appleby Ranch became the rendezvous for a different class of cowboys, some possibly "on the scout."

Tragedy seemed to pursue "Aunt Jane" after her second marriage. Her daughters, Mrs. Ririe and Mrs. Yeargin, died. Rosa and Alfred Hoots had four children and one of them, Alfred, eight years old, picked up a cowboy's gun and accidentally blew his younger brother's head off. I was staying at the Hoots' home at the time. We followed an old belief that soot would stop blood. We rushed to the fireplace but all the soot there could not save the child. Later, another son of Mr. and Mrs. Hoots died of measles and a few years ago the daughter, Mrs. Waldo Freeman, died of tuberculosis, followed soon after by her brother, Alfred Hoots. Only Mrs. R. M. Hoots is left, old and broken in health. Possibly the bright spot in her declining years was when her horse "Black Gold" won the Kentucky Derby (1924).

I have vivid pictures of my days on the Hoots' ranch. There were always a dozen or more cowboys to feed. We made pancakes by the crocks full and cobblers by the dish pans full.

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There was plenty of wild berries and an abundance of rich cream.

Hillside Mission was near; this was a fine building in those days of twenty-four rooms, with over one hundred students. Magic lanterns shows were the chief amusement--the teachers at the mission giving the accompanying explanation or rendering appropriate songs. I remember the first one I ever saw was "Auld Lang Syne" - with the song for a keynote. I remember old "Sol Abbott" who, though in his fifties, was a dapper young man in those days. He was married to Roxie Bennett, one of the sixteen year old girls living at the Mission. Sol had his comfortable "Star House" on Lyner Creek and was a pretty well "set-up" cattleman in those days.

As for other recreation, there were the country dances. We used to put on our neat calico, princess dresses, ruffled at the neck and hem, climb into hay wagons and go miles away to some house large enough to hold the crowd. Cowboys, half-breeds, Cherokees and Osages often outlaws "on the scout" would be at the dance. The Osages' "curse of gold" had already attracted the bootlegger and the old square dance usually ended with bloodshed. I remember in particular when Billy Brown, a cowboy, married Joan Gilmore. Her father was

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white, her mother Osage. Great feasts were prepared, with cakes, pies, roasted pig and barbecued calf. The feasting and dancing went on into the night then the drinking started, followed by fighting with clubs. When morning came all was bloodshed and in the midst of it lay the bridegroom clubbed to death.

Then came the flood of 1897. The creek districts always had their annual overflow but the flood was one which the natives still talk about. I remember it for many reasons. I had set many, many ducks and duck eggs that year in particular. These have to be set in low places on the ground because of mites. Our smoke houses were filled with hundreds of pounds of meat and our cellar was full of barrels and stone jars of fruit and vegetables. Foreseeing that sometime a disastrous flood would come, my father had used a horse and pulley and had fastened two huge boards of native lumber from the second story of the house to a large tree on the nearby bank. This was to serve a double purpose. The heavy boards fastened from house to tree formed a bulwark for the house and a means of escape to high ground if the flood came too quickly. It did

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come and we got out safely but everything was swept away or destroyed except the house and the heavy furniture.

The fear of flood discouraged my father and in 1901 he moved to Tulsa. In 1903 I married Sherman Grant Pender, a member of the Tulsa police force. Except for a few years during the war when he was a private guard he has been with the police force ever since.