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Research Field Worker,
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Interview with Rev. Alexander Peter
Age 62
Caney, Oklahoma

I was born near Sunkist, Oklahoma, a country post office in the southeastern part of Atoka County, on May 3, 1875. I belong to Okla Hannali (Six Tribe) clan. My parents came from Mississippi with the early Choctaws, when they migrated to this country. I do not remember the date. Mother and father both were Choctaws. Mother died while I was a small boy and father was shot. He was killed about three miles from the Sunkist Post Office.

In my young days I did not attend school. There were very few schools at that time and most of these were too far away for any of us to attend. And, after I was left an orphan my foster parents would not allow me to attend school. I had to work most of the time. My duty, chiefly, was to arise early, build fires in the chimney or cook stove, milk, feed the stock, work in the field and gather in wood. This was my daily routine and I did not share the pleasure of my boy friends whose parents were living.

I have no doubt, but that my parents were farmers in those days. There was a limit to the education of the

Choctaws. They did not attend school long enough to master any art, but they were real farmers. If a Choctaw had a six inch turning plow, a double shovel or Georgia stock, and a big heavy hoe made of bone, shell or wood, he had all the farm implements that he needed.

The land was rich and fertile and when worked would grow anything that one would wish to raise. Instead of flat breaking, they would use six inch turning plows and make a one-way furrow and check it. The corn was planted in hills, 2 or 3 grains to a hill, about four feet apart each way and was planted by hand. This method was a means of saving labor when it came time to thin the corn out. The seed was saved from the last year harvest. If one would lose his seed, he would replace it by trading something that his neighbor lacked.

He usually had several varieties of types known as Dent, Flint, Flour, Sweet and Pop corn. Each plant was planted some distance apart to keep from being crossed by the wind. Seeds are usually selected, cured and cared for and protected during the winter.

We planted Sweetcorn for early use, Dent corn for shuckbread, (Banaha), Flint for sour bread, (Baluski).

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hawashko) and hominy (tafula), Flour corn for any kind of use that one may desire, some can be roasted and beaten through process, sifted and it will be as fine as flour. The recipe in cooking I do not know but is a good dish.

I am a Methodist by faith and was ordained as a minister at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in November, 1913, Annual Convention. After my ordination I was given appointment to serve at Salem, a church which was founded and organized in the territorial days, of which the date I do not remember. It was located near Boggy River. After statehood the land where the church was located was allotted to me by the United States Government and one acre reserved for church ground. In 1914, I was transferred to another appointment, and in 1917 the church was abandoned and nothing now remains.

There is an old grave yard at this old site.

I have been married three times. The last time I married Fannie Wright and I am now living on our homestead allotment.