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Ella Robinson,
Field Worker,
July 15, 1937.

Interview with Andrew L. Rogers,
Fort Gibson, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Cherokee America Morgan Rogers.

Mrs. Rogers, the daughter of Gideon and Margaret Sevier Rogers, was born at Citico, Monroe County, East Tennessee, December 15, 1830. She grew to young womanhood there and received her education at Knoxville, Tennessee.

On December 20, 1849, she was married to Andrew Louis Rogers at the home of her sister, Mrs. Hugh McDonald McElreath, at Calhoun, Tennessee, by Reverend A. A. Mathias. Mrs. Rogers was a descendant of two of the most noted families of Tennessee whose names have been woven in the history of the state for many generations. She was a first cousin to the famous John H. Morgan, familiarly known in Civil War days as "Morgan, The Raider".

From the Morgan family she inherited her intrepid spirit that enabled her during the vicissitudes of after

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life to conquer obstacles that arose in her pathway.

From the Sevier family she got her Cherokee blood, her patience and endurance.

Her husband's parents, Connell and Anne Dugan Rogers, were married in Rutland County, Ireland, in 1798. They emigrated to the United States and settled in West Moreland County, Pennsylvania in 1817, where Andrew L. Rogers was born. Later, following the trend of westward emigration, they moved to Putman County, Ohio. Mr. Rogers' mother lived to the age of one hundred and one years and died of injuries sustained when a team hitched to a carriage ran over her.

Mrs. Cherokee Rogers lived at Citico after her marriage until the beginning of the Civil War. After they were raided several times by the Northern Army, they moved to Calhoun, Tennessee, but had lost almost all their possessions. One night the Northern Army in a raid took all the horses they possessed, among them was a fine horse that had been given Mrs. Rogers by her cousin, General John H. Morgan, who had been taken prisoner and confined

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in a Northern prison at Columbus, Ohio. General Morgan managed to make his escape from the prison and made his way through the lines until he reached the Southern Army. On returning home he gave Mrs. Rogers the fine horse he was riding that had been supplied him by his southern friends. The next morning after the horses had been taken Mrs. Rogers told her husband she was going over to the Northern camp and get a horse. She went, and told the officer in charge what she came for. As she looked very much in earnest, he told her she might take one horse and to make her selection. She took John H, as they called the horse, named in honor of his former owner. She said, "No Yankee, has ridden this horse yet, and never will". As the War had left them almost destitute of property when in 1871 a representative of the Cherokee government went to Tennessee and other states to induce all those of Cherokee blood to move to the Indian Territory, Mr. Rogers decided that opportunities in the West would be better for their fast growing family consisting of five boys and two girls. They were given free transportation

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for themselves and household goods by the Cherokee government. Among their few household possessions was a fine piano which Mrs. Rogers brought along.

The M. K. & T. Railroad had been built through the Territory that year and Gibson Station was the Terminal. They were met there by her sister's son. Her sister was Mrs. Eblin (formerly Mrs. McElreath) who had lived in the Territory for some years. It was dark when they reached the Grand River which they had to cross in a ferry boat and the boat had been tied up for the night. As the ferryman refused to take them across the river, Mr. Rogers said, "There are enough of us to run the boat", so they untied the boat and drove on. The ferryman then agreed to take them over. They stayed at the home of Mrs. Eblin for a time, then rented a farm nearby. They they bought a small farm from Mr. F. H. Nash, a Fort Gibson merchant, who afterward became their son-in-law.

They named the place "The Jungle" as it was in a dense woods. There they lived for three years, and Mr. Rogers, who had been crippled from a knee injury, died there in 1875 at the age of fifty-seven.

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After the death of her husband, Mrs. Rogers wanted a location with more land available. She then bought a claim from Mr. Nash on the east bank of the Arkansas River, where the Electric Power Plant now stands. They occupied a small house on the claim until they could build a more commodious one. There was only a small field in cultivation and the land was covered with heavy timber and a dense canebrake. The task at hand was to get the land cleared and put in cultivation. With her own energetic sons and the help of the neighbor men they went on what seemed a gigantic undertaking.

As was the custom of the Indian to help each other, her neighbors told her to have "a-working" and all able-bodied men for miles around came. They would work all day cutting timber, rolling logs to be burned, selecting the best from which to make rails, and clearing away the underbrush. They used an ox team to haul the logs. A big dinner was always served in the middle of the day. The occasion always closed with a dance and supper at night. One of the boys would take the farm wagon and

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gather up the girls in the neighborhood for the dance.

It was a happy, peaceable crowd of young folks that danced long past midnight to music furnished by a neighborhood fiddler. As Mrs. Rogers was a Presbyterian in faith, and by membership, her pastor, Reverend Stoddard, reprimanded her for allowing her young folks to indulge in such worldly amusements. He said, "I can't pray those stumps and logs out of that field, I'm just going to dance them out".

While her young sons were busy in the fields she was occupied with the task of grubbing the canebrakes out of the yard with a hatchet. When the time came that they were ready to build a larger house the boys hauled the lumber from the nearest sawmill eighteen miles beyond Tahlequah. The new house was a story and a half structure with four rooms below and two above, a long front porch and a back porch around the ell.

In their new home Mrs. Rogers delighted to entertain their many friends and relatives and it was a treat, indeed, to partake of her gracious hospitality.

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As Mrs. Rogers' sons possessed the same energy and business acumen as their mother, they were not long in accumulating property. They combined stock-raising with their farming activities.

When the eldest son, Connell, married Miss Florence Nash, he made his home near his mother. In connection with their farming and stock-raising the boys contracted with cattlemen to feed beef cattle through the winter and prepare them for spring market. One winter 1,000 head of beef steers belonging to Mr. Nip Blackstone were fed there.

As Mrs. Rogers possessed more energy than it seemed possible for one little woman weighing less than one hundred pounds to have, she insisted on working in the fields with her boys. Holding a conference among themselves they decided that when she came out to work in the field they would stop. On finding out what it was all about, she agreed to confine her efforts to the vegetable garden and the house. By no means was all her energy directed to material things. Having secured a splendid classical

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education in her early days, she did not neglect to add to her store of knowledge that kept in touch with everything that made for a cultural life. She possessed a marvelous memory and was a great reader. It was her delight, at the close of the day, around a cheerful wood fire to read to her children, always selecting the best in literature. She was a lover of Shakespeare, Scott, and Burns.

Mrs. Rogers often entertained her boys while they worked in the field by telling them stories. One day while they were working she was telling them the story of Damon and Pythias and she said, "Boys, keep your eye on the corn field, don't look up so much; if a flock of angels should fly over, I will tell you". Just then the dog ran after a squirrel, the boys following in close pursuit. On coming back one said, "Now, Mother, go on with the stories", but she replied, "I won't finish it, I won't tell stories to boys who run off to chase squirrels".

Notwithstanding the hardships incident to pioneer life Mrs. Rogers maintained her fine spirit and never

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varied from her ideas and ideals of right. She implanted in her children a deep sense of integrity and fair dealing, and the word of her son was as good as his bond. In 1905 they erected a large modern house on the same location. Before the allotment of Indian land they owned and cultivated three hundred acres of fine river bottom land. It had been a long way from the little cabin home and the four and a half acre field, where the intrepid little woman had settled on the banks of the Arkansas River. One of the outstanding features of the family life was that they held all of their property in common having only one bank account. No question of unfair dealing among them ever arose. The Rogers boys were the pioneers in potato growing as a commercial enterprise. They also were the first to plant alfalfa in this section of the country.

Not only did Mrs. Rogers attend to the needs of her own eight children, but was called upon to give aid to the sick and needy throughout the community. When "Aunt Chock", as she was affectionately called by all her relatives and friends passed on to the "Happy hunting grounds" on March 18,

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1919, not only did her family sustain a great loss, but the entire community as well. Truly, the pioneers of the Indian Territory were not all men.