

McCOY, GEORGIA LEE CARR.

INTERVIEW #7335

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BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History ~~Book for Oklahoma~~

MCCOY, GEORGIA LEE CARR

INTERVIEW

7335

Field Worker's name Lula Austin

This report made on (date) August 26 1937

1. Name Georgia Lee Carr McCoy (Choctaw)

2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 223 North 3rd.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: nth November Day 5 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Paris, Texas

6. Name of Father John Emery Carr Place of birth Doakville
Choctaw

Other information about father Stockman

7. Name of Mother Alice Corine Johnston Place of birth Marshall,
Texas

Other information about mother White woman

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____.

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Lula Austin,
Interviewer,
August 26, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Georgia Lee Carr McCoy,
223 North 3rd , Durant, Oklahoma.

Bloomfield

It was in 1847 that Reverend John H. Carr was appointed by the Methodist Conference to superintend the construction of a school for girls of the Chickasaw tribe.

Reverend Carr had been riding the Doaksville circuit in the "Indian Mission Conference" since 1845 and was considered an able man for the trust given him. In December, 1852, work was started on the buildings, he wielded the axe that struck the first blow for what was to become a famous school. The site he had chosen was approximately twenty miles southeast of Durant. When asked by Mr. Jackson Kemp where to address his mail while at the school, Reverend Carr gazed on every side of him at the prairie flowers in prolific growth and gorgeous bloom and said "Bloomfield." Thus it was that the school was named.

It was thought that the school should have been named

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"George Washington Academy" because the Federal Government throughout the years of its existence paid the school \$1000.00 a year from the fund donated to George Washington by the first Congress of the United States in acknowledgement of his services in the Revolutionary War. The bulk of the expenses, however, were met by the Methodist board which paid one-third and by the Chickasaw Nation which paid two-thirds of the upkeep.

The school received \$66.66 per year for each pupil. Mr. Carr's salary was \$600.00 a year. A Board of Trustees helped him with his problems concerning the school. This board was always composed of the Superintendent of Missions of the church and of two Chickasaw Indians. It was necessary that the funds to be used be raised so Reverend Carr tended the gardens himself. Being a good carpenter and cabinet maker, he also did all this sort of work around the school.

When school opened in 1853, twenty-five girls reported for instructions. Among the first pupils were Serena Factor, mother of Mrs. Douglas H. Johnston, and her twin sister, Lorena; Amelia and Lucy Kemp, daughters of Jackson Kemp;

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Rebecca Colbert, sister of Frank Colbert; Mary and Frances Kemp, now Mrs. Minor Mead, daughters of Joel Kemp; Mary Ann Colbert, daughter of Morgan Colbert; Rebecca Burney, daughter of the deacon of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church; Elvira and Elzira Colbert, daughters of Lemuel Colbert; and Carter Elzira Hoyt; Emily Allen, Sellie Shecho, and Mildred Fletcher.

Following the accepted curriculum for girls of that day, literary studies were taught in the morning from 8:30 to 12:30, and the afternoon was devoted to instruction in Art and the Domestic Crafts. Some of the early students had to be taught English before they were taught anything else. From the inception of the school until its removal to Ardmore, each school year closed with public examinations, questions being asked the students by members of the audience present for the exercises.

In 1860 the school was officially closed because of the impending war between the states. However, a free private school was held each morning for three hours by Reverend Carr. Parts of the school was used for the Chickasaw

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Battalion, a unit in the Confederate Army stationed in the Chickasaw Nation. Then in 1867 Reverend Carr severed his connection with the school and moved to Paris, Texas, where he lived until his death.

Many interesting stories of the hardihood of this pioneer educator and preacher were told. Among them was the story of his own daughter's death. He made her casket, as he had made caskets for the rest of the community, and he preached her funeral. This daughter, Kitty Carr, was the first person to be buried in Bloomfield.

After Reverend Carr relinquished his post as Superintendent of the Academy Captain Frederick Young conducted the school for a year on a co-educational basis. One of his pupils was Douglas H. Johnston. In 1868, Dr. and Mrs. J.F. Murray were at the head; then Professor Robert Cole from 1870 to 1875; and then Professor J. E. Wharton.

In 1876 the Chickasaw Nation decided to make this a girls' school of higher education. In 1882 Douglas H. Johnston became Superintendent which position he held until 1898 when he became Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. It

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was here that he met Betty Harper who was teaching in the school, this meeting culminating in their marriage.

From 1898 to 1909 Professor Elihu B. Hinshaw was Superintendent after having been for a number of years previous principal of the school. An interesting fact of this period is this that in 1900 Bloomfield Seminary had eighty pupils for which the appropriation was \$12,500.00. In comparison, the Orphan's home had sixty pupils and \$9,000.00. The Wapanucka Male Institute had sixty pupils and \$9,600.00. Collins Female Institute had forty pupils and \$6,000.00 and Harley Male Institute had sixty and \$10,000.00. These facts show the extent to which the school had grown and the esteem with which the school was regarded from an educational standpoint.

It was during the term of Professor Hinshaw that Bloomfield became a chartered school with permission to grant diplomas. It was the only Chickasaw school so honored. Due to Professor Hinshaw's interest the Fine Arts were stressed and in 1904 an exhibit of work in this department was sent to the St. Louis exposition where it elicited much favorable comment

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and was awarded a number of prizes.

When Bloomfield burned for the third time in 1914, the school was moved to the buildings and facilities of the Margrove Institute of Ardmore. These facilities were purchased and the school was changed to Carter Seminary, named after the late Honorable Chas. D. Carter, many times United States Representative from that district. At the same time the school was changed back to an industrial school as it was in the beginning. This phase of the work was gradually dropped during the intervening years and it had become an academic school giving instructions along the lines of literary work and fine arts only.

Mrs. Fannie Meade entered Bloomfield in the fall of 1853 and is now the oldest living student of the school.