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Field Worker: Mrs. Etta D. Mason
April 12, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Celia Brown McGahey
Atoka, Okla.

Born June 25, 1880
Near Caney, Okla.

Parents Father, Sampson Brown
Mississippi--Preached to Indians.

I was born near Caney, Oklahoma. The place of my birth was near a Choctaw camp meeting ground called Minnie Springs, or Double Springs.

My father was Sampson Brown. He was a Mississippi Choctaw. I do not remember my mother. My grand-father and grand-mother Lewis lived with us. My grand-father was John Lewis. He was in the removal and fought on the Southern side.

We lived in a log house and father raised corn, cotton and vegetables, also ponies, cattle and sheep.

We made our own meal by pounding the corn. Grand-mother dried peaches and pumpkins and gathered dried peas and beans for winter use. She also spun the wool from the sheep into thread and knit our stockings. We wore calico dresses.

There were plenty of deer and wild turkeys in the woods and we always had plenty of meat. The woods were full of razor back hogs also, and when we wanted pork we had it.

There were very few places of amusement. There were services every Sunday at ^{7:30} Minnie Springs and my grand-mother saw that we attended. The young people had a few dances, and danced to the music of the tom tom. Indian ball was played also. We rode ponies, ran races, and played games, made up among us. After supper, grand-father would tell us stories about the War and wild animals. We would sit as near him as possible and expected every minute to be caught by something.

Grand-mother told us that while the War was going on, she had to stay alone and that the way she took care of her food was to dig a hole under the floor and put the food in the hole and cover it all with dirt. The planks on the floor were loose and could be moved.

Wolves would howl around the house, and more than once she saddled her pony and took her pet lamb in her arms and rode to the nearest house, which was miles away, to spend the night.

On one of these trips she heard wolves behind her and knew that they were on her track. She rode faster and faster but the wolves got near enough to spring at the pony but grand-mother fought them off till the dogs from the farm house, which she was trying to reach, chased the wolves away.

When any of our people died he or she would be buried in the yard, near the house. Every morning the family went to the grave and cried. Our people believed that by doing this the spirits of the dead would rest. The clothing that belonged to the dead was hung near the grave for it was believed that the spirit of the dead would take them away. After several weeks the clothing was given to the best friend of the dead.

We traveled roads made by blazing trees. Some of these blazed trails have become highways. We traveled on horseback and ^{on} foot.

We did not know a word of the English language, but if a white man came to our community he was made welcome. White missionaries often preached at Minnie Springs. They would have an interpreter to let the Indians know what they preached.

Dixon Durant, an old Choctaw minister, often preached at ^{Mary} Minnie Springs. He preached in Choctaw and had an interpreter for there were always white people at the meetings. Camp meetings were held at ^{Mary} Minnie Springs and whites and Indians came for miles and camped for two weeks at a time. Beeves would be killed and barbecued and given to all who wanted any of the meat.

Indian cooking was divided with the whites also. When I was eleven years old my grand-mother died and I was taken to the Baptist Orphans' Home at Atoka where I lived till I was eighteen years of age. I was educated in the Indian School at Atoka. I did not know a word of English when I was taken to Atoka, but now at 56 years of age I do not know many words of my own language. We were not allowed to speak our language at the school and so we younger children almost forgot our own language.

The description of the camp meetings at ^{many} Minnie Springs is true. I have attended many of them, with my father and mother, when I was a child. We lived about 20 miles west of ^{many} Minnie Springs at that time and we would always attend the meetings at that place.

My father was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and attended all religious gatherings.

^{many} Minnie Springs is also called Matubby Springs. The water from the springs for the last few years is used for medicinal purposes and is widely advertised. The salve made from the water is called Grafanola. I think the water has the same name. The springs are in Atoka County and are rich in Indian history. An old Indian cemetery is just across the line in Bryan County. ^{many} Minnie Springs is in Township 4 S, Range 9E, Section 25.