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Etta D. Mason, Interviewer,  
August 16, 1937.

An Interview Mrs. B. S. Smiser,  
Atoka, Oklahoma.

About January, 1885, the name of the newspaper in Atoka was changed from "The Branding Iron" to "The Indian Champion". The influence of some prominent Council members caused this change of name.

June 1, 1885, F. S. Standly bought a controlling interest in this paper and his daughter, Norma E. Standly, ~~was~~ acting editor. On October 30, 1885, the acting editor was employed in the Atoka Post Office and the following appeared in that issue of the "Indian Champion".

To the "Champion" Readers:

With this issue loses our connection with the Champion, and we withdraw from editorial control of the paper.

Our relations have been pleasant and cordial and we hope our services have been the same. We like the field of labor, but other engagements call us. We have attempted to be faithful and impartial in the duties of an editor, and

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if, during our term of service we have offended or wronged anyone, we sincerely beg your pardon.

We bespeak for the "Champion" the continued support of the Choctaws and Chickasaws, and may it live long to "Champion" their rights. J. S. Standley-Norma Standley, Editors.

The Atoka Independent--Atoka's Third Newspaper.

Early in 1886 H. F. Obeim bought the Indian Champion and changed the name to The Atoka Independent. A printing office was established at Atoka and the paper was enlarged.

The "Independent" continued until March, 1889, at which time J. S. Standley and B. S. Smiser bought the Independent and also the Lehigh News, combining both offices in Atoka, enlarging and adding much to the plant.

Captain Standley, still Indian delegate to Washington, gave his interest to his daughter Mrs. B. S. Smiser and the name was changed to "The Indian Citizen", owned and edited by B.S.Smiser and Mrs. Norma E. Smiser. For seventeen consecutive years this management published the "Indian Citizen."

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September 15, 1889, B. S. Smiser was appointed as Choctaw Townsite Commissioner, and Mrs. Smiser assumed full control and management of the "Indian Citizen."

B. S. Smiser had long been the editor and publisher of the "Citizen," but when the Choctaw Townsite Commission was organized, Governor Green McCurtain, of the Choctaws, appointed editor Smiser Townsite Commissioner to represent the Choctaw Nation. Mr. Smiser had to give up his newspaper work, as the townsite work was such that it required all his time.

As Mr. Smiser was engaged in the new business, Mrs. Smiser immediately took charge of the office and the "Citizen." She not only got up the local paper but went into broader fields, and the "Citizen" was one of the best of the Choctaw Nation papers, and published a great deal of the official news of the Nation before any other paper.

Mrs. Smiser once said to a reporter, "I am interested in the Nation--for the destiny of the Choctaw Nation must be my destiny."

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In 1904 B. S. Smiser and Norma E. Smiser sold the "Indian Citizen" to Paul P. Smith. A few months later D. C. Croff bought the plant and continued the publication until the present management bought the plant. Since that date the "Citizen Democrat" has been Atoka's leading publication.

A. F. Bruin has edited several publications in Atoka and has for years been press correspondent.

Jake Salmon, so long prominent in Oklahoma banking circles was on the force of the "Indian Citizen". Lee Fulsom, who is still on the "Citizen Democrat" was for years a member of the force of the "Indian Citizen" and the tamale man, Charlie Colbert, who began as a de-... was pressman when the "Citizen" sold out.

Atoka January 24, 1937.

"From one to five o'clock this afternoon there will be an open house at the First Christian Church of Atoka in honor of the Golden Wedding Anniversary of two pioneer residents, the Reverend and Mr. B. S. Smiser and Mrs. Smiser, Mr Smiser,

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seventy-four of age, has been pastor of the church for a number of years. Mrs. Smiser is seventy years old.

Since entering the ministry in the early years of the century, Mr. Smiser had had only two pastorates, the first in Atoka and the other in Morris.

However, the early years of their married life were spent in Atoka, and it was here that they were married on January 14, 1886, when Mr. Smiser was superintendent of the Atoka Schools. After their marriage Mrs. Smiser took charge of the primary work in the schools under her husband's direction. Both have been prominent in Eastern Oklahoma since before their marriage.

During the time she was editor she was selected secretary of the Indian Territory Press Association. She gave a talk at one of the press meetings on, "The Indian as an American Citizen."

One of the valued heirlooms in the Smiser household is a plain little, straight chair with woven reed seat, believed to be one of the oldest pieces of furniture in Oklahoma. Mrs. Smiser obtained the chair from her grandmother, to

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whom it had been given by her great uncle, Bob McEvers, who lived in the Revolutionary days. He had inherited it from a foreigner who had come to America to take possession of a land grant made to him about 1600.