

SORRELLS, KATHERINE LEWIS.

INTERVIEW

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Investigator  
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Interview with Kathrine Lewis Sorrells  
Atoka, Oklahoma

I was born in San Bois County on the Canadian River September 17, 1867. I am of Choctaw and Cherokee blood. My father was Simeon E. Lewis, born in Gaines County on the Miami river; he was half Choctaw. My mother was Mary Hilderbrand and she was half Cherokee.

Father was educated at Spencer Academy by Presbyterian missionaries. My mother had only a country school education.

We lived a little better than the majority of Indians because father was progressive and believed in pushing ahead in civilization for the Indians. My father always spoke of his teachers and of the missionaries at the academy as a heroic band of men and women, many times sacrificing themselves to help others.

My mother kept up the home by being a good mother and wife. She spun thread and wove cloth and canned and dried vegetables for winter use.

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she, too, believed in building up the community in which she lived and she and my father helped many a poor Indian over grave difficulties.

Later, Father was District Judge over San Joaquin, Shulleyville, Sugar Loaf, Gaines and Cal counties. He was also active in work with the James Commission. He wrote the supplemental agreement, with the help of Tom Sanguin and Gilbert Duke. His duty in the James Commission was to watch the rolls. He had an old slave who helped him to identify the freedmen and many were the pleas for enrollment that might have been accepted if Father had not had the darky to help him.

My grandfather on my father's side had owned slaves and it was through the help of one of these slaves after he was freed that my father was able to attend Spencer Academy. This ex-slave worked at the Academy and helped to pay my father's expenses. In after years when the slave was old and needy my father was able to repay the debt by taking care of him.