

SPICER, RENA (MRS.) INTERVIEW 5890

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Interview with Mrs. Rena Spicer,  
Wyandotte Tribe,  
209 F. SE. Miami, Okla.  
Nannie Lee Burns, Field Worker  
May 20, 1937

My father, Bernard D. Cotter, was Wyandotte and French.

My mother, Dora Faber, was Wyandotte and Dutch. They came from eastern Kansas and both attended school at the Wyandotte Mission School under Dr. Kirk and were married by him.

Mother died when I was three and Father when I was ten.

My grandmother came from near Ontario to Ohio and on to Kansas. I have heard her describe the journey. She said that they came in covered wagons and the men rode horseback. The babies were strapped to boards and I have heard her tell stories of the people of the towns coming out to camp to see them. These people pitied the little babies strapped to those boards.

My name is Rena Cotter Dyer Spicer. I do not know when I was born but I was born near Wyandotte.

When my mother died, my aunt, Lucinda Cotter Forsythe Dyer, adopted me through the Indian Agency.

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She had no children of her own but raised thirteen children besides myself. We then lived three and one-half miles southwest of Wyandotte.

At an early age I was placed in the Wyandotte Mission School where the Friends' Minister Jerry Hubbard was in charge. When I was small he blessed my foster sister Emma and me into the church. I remember his laying a hand on each of our heads at the same time. Very fresh in my memory are the many Cottage Prayer Meetings that were held there during my school days. These were held in the daytime. Also I remember the Modocs who would come there to the meetings and would testify.

From Wyandotte, I was sent to Haskell where I remained till I graduated. At one time we had eleven hundred students at this school. At one time they brought two Eskimos there but they were sick so much that they had to be sent home. Can you tell me why? These Eskimos had tuberculosis and I believe the cause of their having tuberculosis was change of climate, but I wonder why so many of

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my people--the Indians--have it. I have lost several members of my family with tuberculosis and I know that I have the disease in an advanced stage.

My father was too young to be a soldier but he belonged to the militia. He always had money and he kept this in the bank at Baxter Springs. After his death my family always took me along with them when they wanted to get money there. I don't know why they took me with them.

#### TRANSPORTATION.

Our people came from Kansas and they drove a yoke of oxen and I have heard them say that one day they came to a creek which they could not get these oxen to ford, so they hitched horses in front of the oxen and in this way got the oxen into the water. We traded at Seneca, Missouri, and like our neighbors did not go to town very often, usually only once or twice a year.

When I was growing up, we still had oxen, a pair named January and February. Sometimes when we children were sent for the cattle we would ride home

on the backs of the oxen.

#### MARRIAGE.

I married Alexander Spicer, whose real name was Zane, but he had been adopted by John Spicer, though his own father was living and lived till his son, Alexander Spicer, was married. We were married at the Friends' Church at Council Hollow, August 17, 1895. Mr. Spicer was much older than I. We had twelve children. They were: Ora, Reo, Illus M. Lee, Christopher, Arley, Velma, Merl and Berl, twins, a baby who died in infancy and Emma and Oma.

It was pleasant to have them around and they were like most children. I have always tried to raise them right and make them mind. I used to carry a little switch to the table when they were small and would occasionally have to switch their little legs under the table. My children have been sent to the Wyandotte School, where my husband and I, also my parents went to school and where I now have a grand-daughter attending school. I am raising this grand-daughter.

There was a time when the Indian Agent, Mr. Beaver, discontinued the attendance of the Wyandotte children at this school but later the Agent, Mr. Mayer, succeeded in getting them back so except for a few weeks that one of the boys attended the Catholic School at Lincolnville, when my husband was blacksmith for the Quapaw Tribe, till we moved to Miami some fifteen years ago the Wyandotte School is the only one my children have ever attended.

When we were married, we went to live on Mr. Spicer's farm where he had a two room house, one room of logs and the other a box-room. My dresser was a cracker box. Mr. Spicer was not much of a farmer, but had some truck patches. At the time we were married he was a government policeman. My father and my foster mother, who was also my aunt, both became ill and we moved to Wyandotte to take care of them. We stayed there till I became ill and they had to take me home on a feather bed.

My husband died here in August, 1932.

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## MISCELLANEOUS.

The Indians have always liked paint but not like the younger girls paint their faces nowadays. An Indian girl used to paint the line where she parted her hair, red.

My mother was the belle of the Wyandotte Tribe. She was tall and had long black straight hair which was so heavy that they had to keep part of it cut out. She had a good clear complexion.

I have a handsome piano in my little home. I can still sing and several of my children are gifted musicians.

My father was a sawyer, he was also one of the Modoc Farmers, and served on the Wyandotte Agency Police.

## CONCLUSION.

I have for many years been a member of the Friends' Church and have served at different places in this church as well as in the old Friends' Church of the early days.

This old church still stands at Council Hollow and is still used by the Friends.