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Indian-Pioneer History
April 29, 1937

Interview with
Mrs. Stella, Reuben
Sac and Fox Indian, fullblood
Route 3, Cushing, Oklahoma.

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When I was a young girl, we didn't treat our parents as they do today. There was no back-talk or wise cracks when one of the parents told us to do something. We knew we had to do it, so we went ahead and did. If we committed a misdemeanor we either had to go to the river and take a bath (if it was wintertime) or fast. However, it was the custom for everyone to take a bath in the river every day whether it was summer or winter. I took one every day morning and evening until I was married.

In midwinter they often had to cut a hole in the ice. They knew the swimming hole and always cut where the water wasn't more than waist high. Then they stripped and dipped themselves to the shoulder four times. After a brisk rubdown, they were ready for the day's work.

As the country was settled by the whites, we gradually cut it out. We never knew when some ^{one} was going to come upon us while we were taking our bath.

I went to the Sac and Fox Mission for my schooling, but didn't get very far. On one of my vacations in the summer I got married.

All the girls and boys in the school then wore uniforms. Our life was just one bell after another. We got up by bells, ate by bells, walked and worked, and went to school by them.

Everything was routine work and much different from our free life on the reservation. I think that is the main reason why so many of the children hated the school. As for myself, I liked the school work itself, but didn't like to be tied down like that.

The blanket Indians often came to the school asking to visit their children. Few of them could speak English, so one of the girls in the school usually acted as interpreter. Quite frequently the parents of the children in school camped for months at a time along the creek at the agency so as to be nearer their children. This made it easier on the children, too.

I lost my husband a year ago, and now I am alone. The changes made since I was a girl make me sad. The Indian of long ago was much happier than the Indian of today. We will become accustomed to white man's ways sometime, but they are not the ways of the Indian.

I miss my horses more than any thing. When I was a girl, I had many horses and loved them. When the whites started coming in I gradually lost them, and now I have none.