

RINKS, EMMA MINTA.

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Wylie Thornton,This report made on (date) August 23, 19371. Name Emma Minta Rinks,2. Post Office Address Tahlequah, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) Route 2, Box 3,4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 22 Year 18745. Place of birth Nashville, Tennessee.6. Name of Father Lewis Payne Place of birth Nashville,
TennesseeOther information about father Served in Civil War.7. Name of Mother Mahalie Wilson, Place of Birth Near Nashville,
Tennessee.Other information about mother Mother died here February 14, 1881.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 7

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Wylie Thornton,
Field Worker,
August 23, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Emma Minta Rinks,
Route 2, Box 3,
Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

The Cherokee Nation as I Remember It.

I was born in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 22, 1874 and my parents moved immediately to Texas to live, remaining there only one year. My father's name was Lewis Payne and Mother's name was Mahalie Wilson, before her marriage. We had a brother born into our family just before we left Texas for Oklahoma and his name is Charley Payne.

I was moved from Texas to this country on account of the Cherokee blood in our family and Father moved here with the intention of proving our right to the Cherokee allotments but the way it all happened, I am sorry to say, was this; Mother died not long after we had started in to prove our rights and then our lawyer, named Johnson, died, making our case still more difficult.

After my mother died my father gave up the matter and the case was never taken up any more.

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I have two full brothers, one full sister and three half-brothers by my stepmother whose maiden name was Foreman and who was the widow-Balintine before her marriage to my father.

Father has never taken any particular part in the political life of this country, only serving willingly as a juror in court trials involving many important cases, dating back to about 1877. In this connection, you might say that away back there during those pioneer days a lot of citizens declined to serve on a court jury on account of fear of retaliation from certain elements.

I have two grown daughters of my own whom I have educated and prepared to teach school and the two sisters are teaching in the same school this coming school year and taught there together last year. The name of this school is the "Hungry Mountain School", although this school is not located on the mountain as the name indicates but is located at the foot of the mountain.

I did not receive much education; I went to school down here at the old church that was called the Moravian

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Church. It was a subscription school taught by the man who established that church and it was located on the Bill Balintine place, the name of the teacher being T. M. Rights who was a full fledged, red-faced Dutchman from the state of Pennsylvania. I don't understand now what his church stood for unless it was for people to quit lying, stealing and cheating their neighbors. Anyhow, my stepmother asked me to go with her into this church and I did, and I remember Mr. Rights baptized us just like Methodist preachers did and some of the people who went into this church with us were the Rosses, Hintons, Balintines and Uncle Bob Meigs and his family.

In fact, all of those old timers who believed in doing right belonged to that Moravian Church.

My sister got a good education; she is right smart younger than I am and she attended the school that was started up later and she was permitted to attend the Female Seminary just the same as any Indian girl and she was not an enrolled Indian and none of her folks were enrolled Indians, but she got in this school just the

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same and how Daddy got her in, I don't know.

I remember we had a Baptist Mission School located north of town, but of course, it's in town now, right about where Buck Wyly lives, or just across the street east of the Tahlequah High School.

The man who had charge of that school about that time was named Rogers and he preached at his own Mission and was probably the first white man preacher who ever preached at what was then known as the White Oak Indian Church. The location of Oakville is now known as Qualls, out here in the Cookson Hills, and this man Rogers was also the first white man to preach at Oaks Indian Church. Oaks is near Kansas, Oklahoma.

Darius Ward and Uncle Watt Duncan were the preachers at the old Presbyterian Mission in Park Hill about that time and both were known as fine and faithful men.

The pioneer doctors whom I knew were Dr. Blake, Dr. Bartow Fite and Dr. Dick Fite. Dr. Bartow Fite is still living in Muskogee and is the father of Doctors Bartow Pat Fite, Jr. and Dr. Halsell Fite.

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Doctor Bartow Fite owns a fine farm about ten miles north of here on Number Ten Highway and the way to go there is to go up Number Ten Highway until you get to the foot of the Sparrow Hawk Hill or Mountain and take that left-hand road to that bunch of houses. That was Dr. Fite's hiding out place when he wanted to rest. Dr. Fite is not past seventy-eight years old.

I was so well acquainted with Mr. Bacone who was a teacher away back there in those pioneer days in that Baptist Mission north of Tahlequah and they had another teacher up there named Carrie Armstrong and this Mr.

Bacon thought he ought to be made Superintendent of that Mission but he failed to get that job and left and the next time I heard of him he had started that Bacone school up there near Muskogee and that's where that school got its name.

The Indians and the whites both believed that the old Harris place was haunted and I have seen some strange things up there myself. Right there near where those two Carter tombstones are located I saw strange lights

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and I never have been able to find out what they could be unless they were some kind of strange spirits.

This place I am living on is part of the Harris place and it runs away back south of here, plumb beyond the Bill Balintine place. My father bought this place from Mr. Harris' daughter after the death of Mr. Harris and her name was Ida Culbertson after her marriage.

Pretty nearly all of the place has been sold by now except six acres here and six acres across that spring branch toward Tablequah.. Everybody who knows that old place where the Carters are buried, knows about those haunts, but I believe some people believe that the old outlaws buried gold around on the place and there have been gold hunters from away off hunting gold all around this place and there are all kinds of holes dug all up and down that hill away over in the east.

The old-time road from Park Hill ran east of us here and later this road was made where it is now on the west of us. We didn't have any roads hardly in the early

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days but we were not taxed to death, and everybody made a living easily and people were humans then and were not throat cutting all the time. If I had only a pint of milk I would divide it with my neighbor and pay was never thought of.