

RISHEL, E. H.

INTERVIEW

#4519

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INTERVIEW

Form A-(5-149)

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

4519

Field Worker's name Melba J. Harris

This report made on (date) June 2, 1937

1. Name E. H. Rishel (Miss Rishel's wife)

2. Post Office Address Chickasha City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1010 E. 1st St 14

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 19 Year 1888

5. Place of birth Stevenson County, Illinois

6. Name of Father Benj Rishel Place of birth Warville;

Other information about father emigrated from

7. Name of Mother Sarah Rishel Place of birth Lewisburg;

Other information about mother emigrated from

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 10

Amelia F. Harris,
Interviewer,
June 22, 1937

An Interview with Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Rischel
Pioneer Missionaries,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

My wife and I were 3rd in the American Baptist
Commission of Illinois to undertake missions. This
mission was to the Territory of Oklahoma. We
missionaries were free to go and do as we pleased.

The American Baptist Commission of Illinois
contract with the Creek Government was to teach,
missionaries were to be paid \$1000.00 per year,
and to have a free trip to the Territory. The funds
were not sufficient to pay for the trip. We
went; as it was a long trip, we had to go
with strong healthy children and a good teacher.

There had been for the first time a school
and had to take care of the children. The
Boston and that is where we were. We had
school books we would not have had as well as we did.

Our main school building was constructed of pine
frames; our dormitories were built of red boxwood and the
kitchen and dining room were all lined up with mud;
but they were not cold as we burned wood stoves and had
kerosene lamps.

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We made and used tallow candles for the dormitories. The dormitories and beds were terribly infested with bed bugs, so our furniture was made of wood and every week we went over the beds with kerosene.

We put this kerosene in a bottle in the cork stopper and in this cork stopper we stuck a quill and this method we could get to the small cracks and keep the bed bugs pretty well stamped out.

The girls did the housework and they did the laundry work and we were very systematic and ran on a schedule line.

We rang a bell to rise, then the covers back for the beds to air, then the children dressed, washed and wrapped their hair (remember these were negro children), then they tidied up

their rooms and then the next bell rang at five thirty, break-

We also had a schedule for plaining meals - twelve girls every two weeks - for the morning meal; three made the biscuits, three made the coffee, two prepared the bacon, three set the tables ready.

We had white cotton tablecloths and every child had a napkin. These napkins were tied with different colored strings to tell them apart.

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Three girls got the milk, syrup and butter; he bought butter of the firm and at eight thirty A.M. everybody was supposed to be ready to go to school, which lasted until twelve o'clock.

He had a meal of corn bread, coffee, potatoes, onions and a big pot of soup, either white or green, and peas. He had our meal or dinner at noon, our supper was not so heavy as our supper table left over with light rolls, butter and syrup.

In teaching these girls every two weeks he taught every girl to cook and wait on the table. Saturday was her day.

He never had but one hour of school for the girls in the afternoon from one to two. The boys were taught from one to six and were taught everything there was to be about a farm, its planting and care. He had two hundred acres of farmland.

The girls were taught to sew, to dress, pants and blouses, ^{linens} shirts and the household. The twelve girls usually had the garden and gathered vegetables for the table; they would always sing some negro song as they picked their tubercle.

He had wonderful gardens in this valley land and he canned and dried what vegetables he could and he canned up sweet potatoes and turnips and some neighbors would donate a barrel of

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much better than they could speak English but they were apt pupils and learned fast to speak, read and sing in English.

The children all sang well. These children were not very unruly but when they were punished they were receiving them in some privilage.

I had one boy who resisted in riding until finally I took him into my office and said "Edward, you think you does not love any life to you and I will be creck to send you home." He said, "If you whip, I be good all time." I tried whipping him and it worked.

After the second year of our school the Creek Government made a new contract for us to take thirty more children at \$50.00 for each child per year. They built more dormitories and enlarged the school room.

Every Sunday we had a church service in the auditorium and prayer meeting every Wednesday night.

We had these children memorize certain parts of the Bible and different books of the Bible and then we would go to reading at a church house about a mile and a half away from us. The preacher would preach in English and would have an interpreter to translate his sermons into the Creek language.

In 1891 the Creek Government decided to try a negro sup-

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intendent. I said "all right, but an influential negro came to me and said if I would pay him \$50.00 he would fix it so I could stay on. (Politics played a part in Government affairs away back there.) I replied that I would not do it and said that if four years of service was not recommendation enough I did not want to stay. This was in January, 1891.

I was then offered a good position by J. G. Murrow at Atoka to supervise the Atoka Baptist Academy, a boarding school for Choctaw children, maintained solely by donations. I took this position. We had about twenty children at first but they kept coming as long as we would take them.

We were sorely pressed many times but the New England states helped a great deal here with donations of clothing, shoes and books. There was not any live stock at this school and one kind citizen donated a cow, another gave us some pigs and D. N. Robb donated two young mules unbroken and each year our cows and sows, pigs increased and helped greatly in our upkeep.

We used wood for fuel as it was plentiful near Atoka and the boys would cut and haul twenty and thirty loads

before they started sewing and making it up after school hours.

I often look back on that time and wish I had had a little more.

In October, 1927, we had a contract with the government for sewing machines. They gave us \$110.00 per year for the machines and we then received, really for the government, \$100.00 per year. I think we had about 100 machines at that time. We had a store at the school, and we had a tuition of \$1.00 per month.

We had a public teacher at the time. I think we had a teacher and a principal and a few other people.

I had an opportunity to buy some sewing machines. I had a shop, with a window in the front. I had a few machines. I had twelve pieces, I think. I had a few machines. We were proud of them. They were an asset to the school and they were needed. I think we had a few machines. I had a few machines, which I did.

We got these boys training in the shop. I had a circular saw, I had a hand power; later, I got a gas engine on the line geared to this engine and some other things from a discarded gin. This contrivance gave us power for

three different turning lathes and a small circular saw.

with the chairs, the ripped up boards, the tables, book shelves, magazine racks, the sockets, vases, jewels, and what-nots of all kinds. We also had a printing office of the hand set type, and we had a printing press which printed the newspapers, etc., and a printing press. The printing press was very efficient, and Solomon J. Kerner, the printer, was very efficient, and took care of the press, and I called on him to assist in printing the laws of the Chickasaw tribe.

We were just getting started in the school, and we were very busy. I had many children in the school, and we were very busy. We were very busy with the school, and we were very busy with the school. We were very busy with the school, and we were very busy with the school.

I supervised this school for ten years, and I had many children in the school, and we were very busy. I had many children in the school, and we were very busy. I had many children in the school, and we were very busy.

We did not have a school before, and we were very busy. We did not have a school before, and we were very busy. We did not have a school before, and we were very busy. We did not have a school before, and we were very busy.

Many boys and girls who were educated at our school are today prominent citizens and assets to any community. Chas. Crumpton was a fine school teacher. He was a full blood Choctaw.

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Sallie and Frances Williams, full blood Choctaws, were among our students. Sallie married a ranchman and moved to Tuttle.

Mary Baker, daughter of a prominent Choctaw Baptist minister, left our school to teach. She taught for one year then was married to J. James, a cattleman.

Two others of our students were Martha and Rose. Martha was married to Mr. Leroy Long, a prominent physician of Oklahoma City. Rose is a progressive farmer at Okdo.

Ice Polson, a full blood Choctaw, became a printer and is now working for the "Atoka Citizen."

Miss Muriel Wright, one-half Choctaw, is a writer of history.

He never could have accomplished what he did, except for the hearty cooperation of the Atoka citizens and the loyalty of our other pupils who finished school and entered private industries. Their sympathy and enclosures in letters were a great help to us.

In the Creek Nation, a mile and a half to the southwest of Callahasse Mission there was a neighborhood called Creek Freedom that had been known for years as Freedom, and people who knew thought the name appropriate.

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We arranged with the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society, with headquarters in Chicago, to send a graduate of the Chicago Baptist Training School to make her home with us and devote her time to the needy neighborhoods within reach of the mission. She devoted a part of her time to Sodom with gratifying results. The name was soon changed from Sodom to Pleasant Grove.

This school later merged with the same school now at Muskogee.

After twenty-four years of service he resigned from the work to take a much needed rest and to visit our parents who were in Oklahoma City.