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

Field Worker's name Hazel B. Greene  
Report made on (date) September 1, 1937

Name Martha Jackson  
Post Office Address Fort Towson, Oklahoma  
Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE OF BIRTH: Month -- Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year About 1857  
Place of birth Horse Prairie, 15 miles southeast of Hugo

Name of Father Jarret Jackson Place of birth Did not know, probably Mississippi  
Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Mother Sukey Colbert-Jackson Place of birth Did not know  
Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

es or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story  
the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions.  
line on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of  
ets attached 11.

JACKSON, MARTHA. INTERVIEW.

#7410

Interview with Martha Jackson  
Fort Towson, Oklahoma  
By Field Worker, Hazel B. Greene  
September 1, 1937

OLD SPENCER ACADEMY  
as told by  
"Aunt Martha Jackson"  
Negro freed woman

The parents of Aunt Martha Jackson, a black negress, and evidently almost a fullblood negro, were slaves of one Sampson Folsom and his wife, Kitty. Her father died when she was almost a baby and she was too young to remember when the slaves were freed, but when they were, she went to Spencer Academy to do just any kind of work that they wanted her to do. She assisted in the cooking, sewing, cleaning, and did just anything that a girl of thirteen could do. She went to Spencer Academy just before school was resumed, after the Civil War, and according to history that I have read, that was in 1870. So she must have been born about 1857. That would make her nearly eighty years old now. She was born

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on Horse Prairie, about fifteen miles southeast of the present town of Hugo.

Mr. Alexander Reed was caretaker at Spencer Academy from the time the buildings were rebuilt, and continued as caretaker for a long time after school began. A Mr. John Coulton was Superintendent for about three years.

Then, Mr. Coulton left and Mr. John Reed took his place, and, in Aunt Martha's words: "He was the last Superintendent I knew and I worked there six years. In addition to my work around the school, I washed and ironed clothes for the teachers. I helped the seamstress too. They made all of the boys' clothes, and they sure dressed them nicely. They made their little jackets of gray jeans, and lined them, so they would be warm for winter. They fed them well too. They had men cooks, generally. One I

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know was Mr. Sam Pipkin, a white man. He was the best cook I ever saw."

The teachers were all men but they had women seamstresses. I remember two of the teachers were named, Harrison and Pennybacker.

They had a commissary there and had just everything in it that they needed. Of course, they ran out of things, but would haul supplies from Paris, Texas. Sometimes they would have to get supplies at Doaksville, in the Indian Territory. There were always stores there, and they kept <sup>a</sup> pretty good stock of things.

There was an orchard at Spencer too, and they raised little patches of things to eat and we canned lots of stuff for winter eating. They kept milk cows too. There was a big spring down close to the creek, close to the Superintendent's house, and there was a milk house over

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the spring branch, with a trough in the branch and they kept milk in that to keep it cool. The spring was all walled up so nothing could get in it. They tell me that that spring is so filled in that it is very small now and that the milk trough is covered over with sand and the creek is filled up so with sand that it overflows the spring. It never did then.

When school began in the fall, every boy was cleaned up and his hair cut, for fear of lice and diseases. They were cleaned up good. The boys had to cut each other's hair. The larger boys were assigned to take care of the smaller ones, and see that they were properly dressed, changed and bathed frequently, and ready for meals, etc. The large boys cleaned and scrubbed their rooms, changed the linens, gathered up the laundry and took it to the wash house. Every boy was assigned certain tasks.

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Some waited on tables, some worked in gardens and patches, some cut wood, some milked, some cleaned yards, and then they changed around, took turn about.

We had a big bell that could be heard eight miles away, on a clear day. I heard it after I moved eight miles away. That bell was rung at four o'clock for us to get up.

We had alarm clocks too. We all got up and got ready for breakfast and when it was ready, then Mr. Coulton would always come to the kitchen door and tell us to be ready to come in the dining room for prayer meeting. We knew enough to put on clean aprons and be in there. Everybody on the place had to be there. The bell was rung again. It was rung at noon and at supper. It didn't ring at bedtime for everybody knew we had to be in bed at nine o'clock.

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Everybody had tasks to do until school took up at nine o'clock in the morning and after it turned out at four.

Mr. Coulton was mighty strict about the morning prayers and so was Mr. Reed. Mr. Reed would let us colored folks go into the church sometimes but we could never go to any parties or dances. I never went to parties or dances until after I left there.

The boys were not supposed to speak Choctaw, but they did sometimes, and as boys will, they sometimes fought a little and had to be punished but they were generally kept so busy they had not much time to get into trouble.

Occasionally one would take a notion to run off, but they always brought them back. I know of one little fellow<sup>who</sup> was brought back three times.

Sometimes when the boys would get through with tasks on Saturday, they were permitted to go



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fishing, or squirrel hunting down on the creek. The only game I ever saw them play was croquet. The school accommodated about forty boys and was always full.

There was a hospital room at the academy too where they took the pupils when they were sick. Mrs. Morrison was "Mother" to the boys and nursed them when they were sick and if they were sick enough to need attention at night, she took them to her room. She was still there when I left but she went away.

It was at a big school "turn out" that my old master and mistress came to, that I got acquainted with them again and went back to work for them. My old master's name was Mr. Sampson Folsom and my old mistress' - his wife's - name was Mrs. Kitty Folsom. I called her "Miss Kitty." I would work in the field and in the house and would do just anything they had for me to do. They were

Choctaw Indians. My parents were their slaves when I was born. After I went to live with Mr. and Mrs. Folsom we would sometimes go to Sunday School over at Pine Ridge Academy. The Reverend Mr. Cyrus Kingsbury was there then. The last time I heard of him, he was living with a daughter-in-law, Maria Kingsbury. I guess they are all dead now. I don't know what became of them. Once, Miss Kitty took me to Paris, Texas with her, and the road went right past Rose Hill Farm. Mrs. Bailey was living then and was Miss Kitty's friend and we spent a night there. Mrs. Bailey had been the second Mrs. Robert M. Jones. She was a white woman. We went on across Horse Prairie, and crossed Red River at a ferry. A man by the name of Wilkins was running that ferry then. They told me that all of that Horse Prairie used to be one big farm. I sure was glad to see that old place again for that was the first time I had been there since

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I was very small. After my daddy died, Mamma moved up to a place called Dougland where she died and is buried. It is now called Virgil.

My first husband was a half breed Choctaw Indian. Some called him "Nubb." His name was Louis G. Folsom. I was his common-law wife. Our three children, all dead now, were Daisy, Emma, and Robert. Daisy was stabbed to death by Harrison Wilson, a Choctaw-negro. Emma's husband shot her and she died from the shot, a long time after that.

I live here in this old shack alone. There was a log house here first but it was about to fall down on me, so I got this second hand house and had it put here. It was not much house to begin with, but it has been here about forty years. An old negro, named Matt Freeman, made the boards for the roof when we first re-built it here, about

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forty years ago. He is about ninety years old now and lives at Sawyer.

My next husband was Ab James, a half breed Choctaw Indian, we were not married. Our son was named Davis James. He has been dead four years, buried at Doaksville, so are my other children.

Miss Kitty was a Colbert, my mother belonged to her folks. Mamma was Sukey Colbert, my father belonged to the Folsoms and was named Jarret Jackson. I ain't never been married. I'm a Jackson. Miss Kitty and Mr. Sampson Folsom were each about one half Choctaw Indian.

I had my log house built here long before we filed on any land. Then, after the Choctaws adopted us negroes and said we could have forty acres of land, I went to the Sulphur Springs Court at Alikchi, where they were filing the Indians and negroes, and I filed on this land and still have the most of it. It will be my home when I die.