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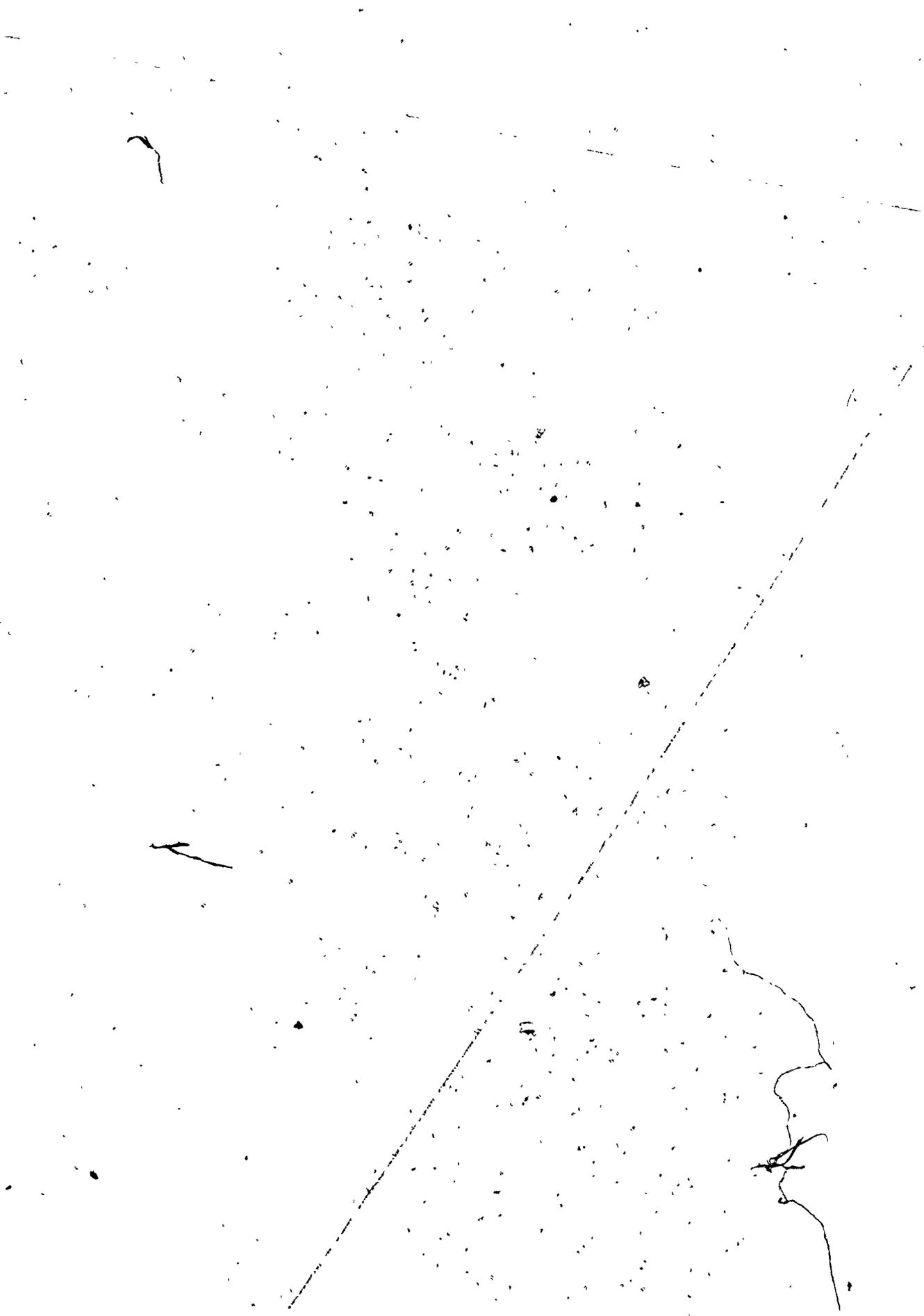
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BIOGRAPHY FORM
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Lula AustinThis report made on (date) October 25 19371. Name Bell Hanev Airington (Chickasaw Indian)2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) W. Evergreen4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 3 Year 18375. Place of birth Arkansas6. Name of Father Bill Labor Place of birth Spain

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Precia Labor Place of birth MississippiOther information about mother Chickasaw

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 6

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INTERVIEW.

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Lula Austin, Investigator
October 25, 1937

Interview Bell Haney Airington,
a Chickasaw Indian, W. Evergreen St,
Durant, Oklahoma.

My mother was a Cherokee. I was born in Arkansas and moved with my parents near Caddo in the Caddo hills.

During the war we had to keep our food and bedding hidden as the soldiers would take everything. I would help my mother cook for the Southern Soldiers; we would get word the day before and we would cook bread and meat all day. The soldiers would pass in single file and take a piece of meat and bread but we would never have enough for all. One day we had cooked some turnips and had them hidden in the cellar when the Northern Soldiers came by and ate them all. We parched meal and wheat to make our coffee and also parched sweet potato hulls.

I remember my grandmother lived with us and at night she would help put us children to bed and would always warm a linsey wool quilt before the fire before spreading it over us.

I used to hoe in the garden with my grandmother. She always wore her hoops, even when working in the garden; the only time she did not wear them, was when

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it was stormy; she said the steel would draw lightning. My sister and I made her a pair of hoops from briar branches, cutting the briars off.

We beat our hominy meal for breakfast. Everyone at our house was up at four in the morning. One morning I was pushing corn in the hopper and sister was beating it with a pestle and she hit me on the head, nearly killing me and another time she accidentally cut my head open with a hoe when I stepped in front of her while she was chopping corn. I nearly bled to death before they got a doctor to sew the wound up.

My mother would go to her neighbors and wash for them. I used to go with her and at one place the children all had sore eyes. They had two springs they used water from, one for drinking and the other for washing. I was so afraid the children washed in the spring that we were supposed to drink from that I went down into the pasture and dug a spring and when it settled, I would lie down on my stomach and drink from it.

At one place where Mother went to wash, they had an upstairs to their log house and we stayed all

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night and I slept upstairs. I didn't sleep, I was so afraid. That was the first and last time I ever slept upstairs.

When I was married my husband took me to a little log house he had prepared for me; the floor was made of split logs; our bed was a scaffold, with one leg, built in the corner. We used oxen to plow with and made our own tools to work with.

When we were first married Father gave us a small piece of bacon and said, "Now, you build to that." We never worried about meat as there was plenty of wild game; sometimes my husband would kill two deer a day and call me to help him bring them in. Some deer had such big horns that he would have to cut them off before we could drag the deer through the timber. Mr. Airington would dress the deer and take it to Caddo and sell what we didn't need; and on many mornings he has killed eight turkeys before breakfast. He would sell them dressed for a dollar and sometimes less.

I used to make pets out of the little fawns and they would stay around the house with the stock. I had planted some beans and I told my husband I guessed

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the rabbits were eating them but we watched and it was my pet fawns.

Turkeys were so fat that one day my husband killed one and it fell into the creek and the skin popped open.

I spun and made my clothes, but when I was married and tried to make my husband a pair of pants, I almost wore the pocket out trying to sew it in. I made my soap and never knew what it was to buy it; I helped saw timber and worked in the field. I have helped to lay many a rail fence.

We always used spring water, and had a barrel in which to catch rain water. I used flint to start my fire and many times I have knocked the skillet with a knife and put a piece of cotton on top so it would catch the spark. I "broke" cows for the use of the milk and some of them were so wild that I would tie them and then milk them through the rail fence; they kicked like mules.

I rode horseback up until 1905 and many times I have had my face skinned when my horse would run away through the timber jumping creeks as he went.

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A Mr. Ashford near Caddo used to furnish melons to the Comanche Indians if they would come and dance for him; everyone would go. I went to one of these dances and was sitting in the wagon with my baby on my lap when one of the Indians jumped on the wagon and began to feel my shoes and my dress which had a design of large red flowers. I was frightened but I just sat there. Another Indian rode up and the first Indian jumped on the horse and left with him.

They had a young Indian girl all dressed in white with jewels on her arms and limbs and they were offering to trade her for nine cows and calves, but no one traded for her.

Our chimney to the house was built of sticks and dirt and there were many holes between the logs and chimney. I was sitting there spinning, barefooted, one evening when I heard a rattling and looked up to see a large rattlesnake that was ready to spring on me. I ran for a hoe and killed it.

My husband's half-sister, Mrs. Willis, was going to see her mother to take her some quilt pieces; her

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husband sent a man and boy with her and said he would
come later. She disappeared and a week later her body

was found lodged on a rock in Little River. It was very
plain that her husband had had her killed, but nothing
was done about it. *