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BROOK, ECK E. (MRS.

HANNAH LINDSEY MARTIN. 5078

350

An Interview with Mrs. Eck E. Brook, Muskogee.
By - Ella Robinson, Field Worker:
January 25, 1937.

HANNAH LINDSEY MARTIN

Hannah Lindsey Martin was born in Tyler, Texas, in 1854, the daughter of Dr. Harvey Lindsey and Martha Saline Cowser Lindsey. Her mother died during the Civil War. Her father returned from his home broken up. He resolved to seek a new home in Indian Territory and it was to this land that she followed her father and brothers in 1870, when she had completed her education at Chermwood College.

Vivid memories of her trip from Texas made in a light wagon drawn by a team of spirited horses made an exciting story for her children and grandchildren. One of the exciting memories of the trip was crossing the Canadian River on a ferry run by the Starr family. Tom Starr, a noted outlaw, with whom the Government treated several times, carried her across the ice near the shore to the waiting boat. Frightened by his huge size and powerful appearance she drew back until Starr said, "Don't be afraid, little girl. I won't hurt you". She found her father and brothers living in the Stand Watie house in Webbers Falls. It was the only

frame house for miles around and was considered a mansion.

Students of Indian Territory history should realize that all of Indian Territory was not illiterate. Many Indian families were well educated, intelligent people with a deep appreciation of literature, and their homes were centers of culture for miles around. One such family was the Hanks family. Mr. Hanks had been in Indian Territory two years when he married Elizabeth Hanks McCarty, a young widow. Hannah Lindsey and Mrs. Hanks were soon good friends.

Beginning with a school at Webbers Falls she taught school for seven years. At that early day a Teachers' Institute was held at Tahlequah, the Capital of the Cherokee Nation, and it was the delight of all the teachers to make the journey to Tahlequah. The trip was made on horseback with a stop at Fort Gibson where they were entertained at the Army post by friends. A dance at the Army post was always a delightful occasion and the social affairs at Tahlequah were long remembered.

In 1874 her father moved to Eufaula, and it was from there that she went out to widely scattered sections of Indian Territory to teach. One school was just across the

river from Fort Smith, one at the present site of Newoka, one at Fishertown and one at Wetunka. All of the trips were made on horseback with one of her brothers as companion. Often caught by storm or flood, crossing streams on a log, fording rivers, teaching many full bloods who did not understand English, spending the night at a farm house that all the neighborhood declared haunted, these journeys were a matter of course to the young girl.

In 1878 she married William N. Martin, then Superintendent of Asbury Indian Mission School at Eufaula. In 1880 they moved to Muskogee, a small village on the new railroad. Their home, one of the first built in Muskogee, was always a favorite meeting place for their friends. The family grew until there were nine children. An orphan niece, Lillian Lindsey, whom they took into their home made the tenth child. In that early day children's clothes were made at home. Dressing the steadily growing family meant work, yet each season found the family well clothed by the nimble needle that oftentimes was plied until long into the night. With all the duties of a faithful mother there was always time for her friends.

BROOK, ECK E. (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

#5078

4

Her mind was a storehouse of poetry, her memory remarkable. Poems and exquisite bits of literature learned when she was a child were always at the tip of her tongue. Friends, wishing to know the rest of a quotation, or the origin of a bit of verse, always found an answer when they came to her. The good things that she read seemed to become a part of her, she never forgot them. She was a constant delight to her children. She always knew the poems that they were learning. Her family grew up not realizing that life was hard in the Indian Territory. All of their childhood recollections are pleasant ones.

She was a member of the General Forrest Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Past Grand Matron of Muskogee Chapter No. 4, Order of the Eastern Star. In May, 1931, she was a delegate to Mrs. William H. Murray's quilting bee and made the Muskogee County Block with stitches so fine that they could scarcely be seen.

Three of her sons saw service in the World War; John, who was gassed in the Argonne, October 18, 1918, and who died in 1922; William L., who was an Army Field

Clerk in London, and Eugene who was on a ship sailing for France when the Armistice was signed.

She counted her friends in every walk of life, counted them because she held them. Several years after her death one of her neighbors said to her daughter, "We still miss your mother. She was the most interesting person in the neighborhood and the youngest". She died December 28, 1931. Seven of her children survived her; Mattie (Mrs. Eck E. Brook); William L., Ethel (Mrs. Reese Evans) Bettie, (Mrs. Joe Bailey Allen); Duvalt, Eugene; and Hannah Sybil, and six grandchildren, William Daniel, Betty and Rhys Evans, and William, Charles and Joe Bailey Allen.