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Comanches--Texas raids

Interview with John Johnson
Atoka. Choctaw Freedmen.
Father was Brit Johnson, belonged
to Allen Johnson, story as given
to Mrs. Etta D. Mason, April 27,
1937.

In 1863, my father lived at Belknap, Texas. He belonged to Allen Johnson. Allen was a ranchman and my father was away from home most of the time. There were three children in the family. An older brother, a sister and a baby brother.

The Comanche Indians had been making raids in Texas from their reservations in Oklahoma (Indian Territory). On one of my father's trips to the ranch a band of Comanches raided our settlement. After killing and stealing all they wanted to kill and steal, they gathered the prisoners. They took my mother, sister and older brother, but killed my younger brother. They also took a white woman named Clifton and her young daughter. The Indians took the prisoners to Ft. Sill or where Ft. Sill is now. Several other whites and slaves were among the prisoners.

On the way to their reservation the prisoners were treated very ~~severely~~ cruelly. At one time the leaders drew straws to see whether they would kill my mother or Mrs. Clifton, then changed their minds and marched on.

Mrs. Clifton wouldn't travel as fast as the Indians

and my mother could not travel fast on account of her health. I was born a short time after we arrived at Ft. Sill.

The prisoners were made to do most of the work and had to eat the food cooked by the Indians. The food was terrible also the living quarters. The Indians branded the white women on their foreheads and kept them painted like the Indians. They did this so that if any of the people of these white women came to the camp, these whites could not be discerned from the Indians. The little daughter was made to look as much like the Indians as possible.

When my father returned home from the ranch and saw what had been done he began to search for us. He did not find us for nearly a year. He bought all the prisoners taken in that raid except the little white girl. The Indians refused to bring her from her hiding place and denied having such a child. He bought the prisoners with corn, calico and beads.

The Indians had told the white women that if she made any sign so that she would be known to her rescuers she would be stabb ed, but as my father and the soldiers were about to leave, she smiled and was recognized as Mrs. Olifton. Of course the soldiers took her from the Indians.

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Her little daughter grew up with the Comanches,
married and reared a family not knowing anything about
her people.