

JEFFERSON, MARTHA.

INTERVIEW

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JEFFERSON, MARTHA. INTERVIEW.  
BIOGRAPHY FORM 6513  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Johnson H. HamptonThis report made on (date) July 1st 193 71. Name Martha Jefferson2. Post Office Address Farris, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month Don't know Day X Year 18675. Place of birth Near Bethel, Indian Territory6. Name of Father Davidson Peters Place of birth Boswell,  
now Oklahoma7. Name of Mother Siney Peters. Place of birth Ida, now  
Battiest, Oklahoma.

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 5.

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Johnson H. Hampton  
Field Worker  
July 1, 1937.

Interview with Martha Jefferson,  
Farris, Oklahoma.

I was born near what is now Bethel, Oklahoma, in McCurtain County, sometime in the year 1867, as to what month and day I don't know. I am just like most of the Indians who do not know what day nor the month they were born; all I know is what I have heard from other Indians.

My father's name was Davidson Peter; he was born and raised near Boswell. I think that he was born between the two Beggys and near where the old Choctaw Court ground was at one time. My mother's name was Siney Peters; she was born and raised near Ida, which is now Battiest, Oklahoma.

I understand that my father came over to our community on a visit and that while here he met and married my mother and lived in that community until they both died.

My grandfather's name was Ahotubbee, I understand that he came from Mississippi and located near what is now Boswell. I don't remember what my grandmother's name was; I did know but I have forgotten the name.

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I have been told that my father was in the Civil War, but I don't know. The only thing I heard my father say about the war was that they nearly starved to death; that they did not have anything to eat for several days; and that water was hard to get on the road they traveled. He would not tell us anything more than that.

We had a little farm and had a few head of cattle, hogs and ponies on our farm. We raised corn and garden vegetables enough for us to eat; we did not can any garden vegetables for we did not know how to can anything; we just ate what we raised without canning anything for the winter. On this little farm we raised enough corn to make our bread but we hardly ever had any flour bread to eat. Once in awhile we got flour bread for breakfast, usually only on Sundays. We made our own meal by beating the corn in the mortar or Tom Fuller block as it was called. We would make different kind of bread out of this corn. We made banana, tanchuplaska, pulaskahauwaske, and bota kapasa, and another kind of bread that Mother made. Too, we made different kinds of hominy out of the corn; we had to do this in order to get bread for us to eat. It was hard work to get this corn ready for meal.

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Our trading point was at Fort Smith, Arkansas. The Indians would get together and set the date for them to leave for Fort Smith, then when they got ready we would cook enough grub to last them for several days. Most of them drove ox-teams to a wagen; some would have two yokes, and some just one yoke. It took them several days to make the trip, and sometimes it would take them several weeks to get back. There were no roads and no bridges on the creeks and when it rained they would have to stay for several days until the water ran down so they could cross the creeks.

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They would bring flour, brown sugar (that was the cheapest) and coffee (the coffee was green and we would have to parch it ourselves). We did not have flour bread to eat very much for it was too far to go to get it, and then we did not have the money any way. We would have to sell something so we could get flour and other things we needed.

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After my parents died, then I moved to where Ludlow is now; at that time it was just out in the woods. But after a while Jefferson Ludlow put up a store and the place was named Ludlow for him. A post office was established then and it was named Ludlow; this place is right in a valley between two big mountains and a big creek runs through this valley. It was wild

country then; there were not many Indians living there then, it was just a community settlement. Nearly every Indian who lived there had some stock of some description but it was so far back in the mountains they could not sell what they did have and it was too cheap to sell any way.

There was lots of wild game, such as deer, turkeys, bears and squirrels and the creeks were full of fish. We did not want for meat but we would get hungry for flour to eat.

In this community there was no church for a while but the Indians built a church which they called Tali Bok, Rock-Creek; it was a Cumberland Presbyterian Church. They did not have any schoolhouse in that community for the children to go to school.

Some Indian ball games were not matched games they were just neighborhood games. The boys would set a date for the game and have everything ready on that date, then they would get together and have a ball game. The older men would play the matched games between counties but I never saw one of them; the little games was rough enough for me to look at, for they would fight in those games just as they would in one of the matched games.

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My former husband was an Indian preacher and we used to go to different churches, where he would preach to the Indians in his own language, for he could not speak English. He would preach funerals and then preach memorials where they would all get around the grave and cry. When an Indian died the wife or husband would cry over the grave until they had the cry then he or she would marry again. As long as the memorial was not preached they would stay single; some times it would be six months or maybe one year before they had the cry <sup>and</sup> the man or woman would mourn that long before they would be ready to marry again.

I never went to school so I can't speak or read nor write in English language; and not only that but I can't read nor write in my own language. I am just a full blood. Choctaw Indian raised in the mountains <sup>and</sup> never had the opportunity of a school not one day in my life. All of my folks are full blood Choctaw Indians and I have lived with the full bloods ever since I was born.