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

Field Worker's name Amelia Harris

This report made on (date) 6-18 1937

1. Name Mrs. Millie J. (Hiener) Marshall

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 216 N. E. 10

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month Sept. Day 22 Year 1875

5. Place of birth Near Athens Texas

6. Name of Father John B. Hiener Place of birth Texas

Other information about father Reared by grandfather, who was an outstanding Texas Ranger.

7. Name of Mother Mattie Marshall Place of birth Texas

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 _____.

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LILLIE HIENER MARSHALL

BY

Amelia Harris, Field Worker

In 1878 my parents moved from Texas to Criner, at the foot of Criner Mountains. These mountains were named for John Criner of a prominent family of Chickasaw Indians. Dad built a four-room log house with puncheon floors (they were made of split logs smoothed off as best he could with a sharp axe, and the knots cut off so they would fit close together). The kitchen had a dirt floor. The whole house was covered with clapboard shingles.

Range was free except a five-dollar permit each year. Father went into the livestock business. He raised principally hogs, which he fattened for market and at very little expense. He had about six hundred head. He was very systematic about handling his hogs, even though they were on open range. He had different bunches at certain places, and every morning he would shuck and cut into small pieces about two bushels of corn, which he put into sacks and tied on the back of the saddle; then he would start out to inspect his hogs.

There was a grove of pecan trees west of the house where he would be at nine o'clock, and there would be about one hundred hogs here waiting for him and here he

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threw down about twenty-five or thirty pieces of corn. Then he would go over to Lone Oak Grove where about one hundred head would be waiting and he would feed these. He knew every hog. In this way he could watch the sows that were ready to farrow. In this way he visited every place where the hogs ranged every day, these hogs would be at their respective places when he got there. They would keep fat off the wild nuts, as they were plentiful. He would cut out the fattest ones and sell them to the butchers in Gainesville. He sold and bought a bunch every month.

In the winter time he would butcher thirty or forty head, rub the side with sugar and salt and smoke with hickory chips. This would be like the English cured bacon we have today. He had the lard rendered and poured into hogheads. He would keep the meat and lard until the first of April, then retail it out. He would get twice as much by holding it.

Every year he would drive his three- and four-year-old steers to Gainesville and sell them. They would be fat steers for there was plenty of good free range. It was a custom among the neighbors (there were about twenty-

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whites, Indians and mixed blood families here) that if any of them needed a milch cow he could go out and look for a good one, drive it up to his pen and milk it as long as he wanted to. The next spring at branding time the cattlemen would brand this calf the same brand as its mother. Anyone could milk the cows as long as he cared to, but he never got any of the calves.

My mother moved her spinning wheel with her from Texas. Dad had a few sheep, too. He would shear, then mother washed and dried the wool, carded and spun it into yarn, and knitted all of our stockings, socks, mittens and nubias (scarfs). She had a loom too, and on this she wove all the material for shirts, and our school dresses. She made all of Dad's breeches out of homespun cloth and jeans. He bought one pair of trousers in seventeen years.

Nobody raised turkeys in those days; they were too plentiful. We would watch them go to roost and later in the night would go and get what we wanted. We had chickens and geese and we picked these geese every year to make pillows and feather beds.

Mother gathered blackberries and dewberries and dried them, also winter grapes, the big muscadines, too.

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She dried these in bunches and on the stems; then when you cooked them they would plump out and be full of juice, but if you pulled them off the stems the juice would run out and they would be tasteless. She made jelly from wild plums.

Once a month when we wanted groceries or other merchandise, every family was notified. They made a list of what they wanted and two men would take two wagons and drive to Gainesville after these things. The next month two other neighbors would go.

Our doctor was a white man. He was an herb doctor. He dug roots, dried and prepared them, then wrapped and labeled each one and carried them around in saddle-bags. We were never very sick--whooping cough, measles, or chills and fever--but whenever we sent for him we knew to have a pot of boiling water ready because he always gave some kind of herb tea.

We had one coal oil lamp and a lantern, but we nearly always used homemade tallow candles. They were crude but answered the purpose.

We had a log schoolhouse with puncheon floors and a chimney built of straw and mud. Fire, and had big wood fires when cold. Our seats were puncheon benches

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with two big holes bored in the corners and stout hickory sticks were put in ~~these holes~~ for legs. This was a subscription school and the teacher's salary was about fifty dollars a month.

Our amusements were going to church twice a month to listen to a traveling preacher of some denomination, or the "young folks" would spend Sundays all day with other young ones. Then the Fourth of July the Chickasaw and Choctaw men would have a ball game and picnic. They made their ball sticks of green hickory sticks with one end twisted around to form a cup and tied in this position until it dried. Their ball was made of strings wrapped around and around into a hard ball, then covered with buckskin sewed on tight.

The Chickasaws had many kinds of dances, each with its own meaning. Dad was always a friend to the Indians and the whole family was invited to these dances. The last one we attended was early in the summer of 1888. There was a fish fry at Crowder Lake in connection with the dance. We took our camping outfit and prepared to stay three or four days. They told Dad to dig up a tow sack full of "devils shoe string," which he did, and when

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we got there they had cleaned off the grass and brush on one side of the lake, and cut down big trees and sawed the trees into two-foot lengths for seats, and four-foot lengths to put into the lake. The men would stand and beat the devil's shoe string and dip it into the water until the water would turn white and the fish would drink the water and they would act as if they were drunk or doped. The men would catch two or three hundred pounds of small fish with their hands and gig the larger ones. We would have a big fry then, and after the supper was cleared away, the stomp dance would begin. They sang a song in the Indian language "Yak a walla - Ya-ken a hoke, Ya ken - a hoke" (about all I can remember) going around a big fire in a circle. They had tied around their waists and knees small gourds and terrapin shells filled with pebbles, which rattled to a kind of rhythm. After they had done this several times, the medicine man would raise his hands skyward and all would stop and look up; then he would pray in the Indian language. They would do this until about midnight, and then everybody would go to bed. We have used this devil's shoe string many times since to catch fish.

We were living at Criner when the Government ordered all the white settlers to vacate. Dick McClish, full-

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blood Chickasaw, came with the soldiers to Dad and Dick told Dad the Indians hated to have him leave, but he would have to take his family out, anyway. Dad moved us just across Red River on the Texas side. We camped there and Dad remained in the Indian Territory and looked after the cattle and hogs. We lived this way for about a month then moved back home.

As the country began settling up, we kept moving our stock to open range. Finally it was all allotted and the free range taken. Dad then sold his improvements and cattle, bought a farm at Ada, and dealt in hogs only.