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Folsom Family
Folsom, Israel
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Name Mrs. Christine Bates

A biographic Sketch

From personal interviews with the subject,

214 North 5th St., Durant, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Lula Austin, Field worker,
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
March 27, 1937.

Date of Birth-----October 10, 1849

Place of Birth-----Mineral Bayou, near Colbert

Father-----Israel Folsom

Place of Birth-----Choctaw Nation Mississippi.

Mother-----Louisa Nail Folsom

Place of Birth-----Choctaw Nation Mississippi.

Israel Folsom and Louisa Nail Folsom buried in
Cemetery at Pogy Point.

Note by Field Worker.

Mrs. Bates has been married twice, her first
husband Mr. Madison Fonton was killed and her
second husband, Mr. W. H. Bates died, July 19,
1901. This story which I have tried to put
together has been gathered from various talks
that I have had with her from time to time.

My Father, Reverend Israel Folsom, and Louisa Nail

Folsom were married in Mississippi, April 11, 1842.

They had nothing when married, and started life in a one room, log house with no furniture except two pillows and a few quilts. Their first hoe-cakes were cooked on an old hoe, which had been found in the garden.

When the Choctaws were to be moved from Mississippi to their new home in Indian Territory, my father, then a young man, was appointed to assist in moving them on this journey to their new home. It was in the winter time when the long journey was started. There was much suffering and many deaths along the way. He started preaching on this journey to the new land and the people had much faith in him. He would ask them to "Keep the Sabbath Day Holy" or they need not expect to get over the road safe. The trip was made in wagons with oxen, leading their horses and cattle.

They, with their three children, arrived at Mountain Fork and from there immigrated to Doakville. The first school was the old Wheelock School. Missourians from the North came and built the school.

My father farmed and my mother spun and weaved, making all the clothes for the family.

My father continued preaching and baptising many people. As time passed, he accumulated a little of the world's goods and was the owner of fifty slaves.

During the Civil War the Northern men were so mean to the Choctaw women, they would jerk their ear rings from their ears, and lock them in one stuffy room together, keeping them there for days. The women would ride horseback into Fort Smith, carrying messages at night and if they were caught they would be tortured terribly. Father and Mother would sit up at night baking potatoes in the ashes and watching over the family, as the negro boys were bad to steal the white girls and take them away.

Four of my brothers served in the Civil War. I remember one coming home late one night very sick; he had walked so far that his feet were swollen and bleeding and he was half starved. We had nothing to eat in those days but gruel which was made out of wheat. We would dry okra and parch it for coffee. Lincoln coffee (named after Abe Lincoln) cost \$100.00 a pound. Calico for dresses was \$100.00 per yard.

My mother would make clothes from the loom and dye them and she also would spin and weave for Southern boys. She made all the clothes for our county (Blue).

The negroes left, some going with the Northern Army and some with the Southern Army. Father owned one old slave who was called Aunt Lindy Butler. She was the mother of twenty-one children, one of whom is now living. His name is Ed Butler and he lives in Tushka. As a signer of the Treaty of 1855 my father was a leader in the Council of Indian affairs, both in the Choctaw Nation and Washington.

During the Civil war my father, who was a Colonel, would drill the Indians all day preparing them for war.

The Quantrell men were neither for the South or North and they would go from place to place breaking up homes.

Creeks and Cherokees were called "Pin Indians." My father was director among them. He and the colony would go on horse-back with their bows and arrows across their backs and hatchets strapped around their waists to visit the Northern Indians and for days they would sit around, and smoke the "pipe of peace," praying and discussing what could be done; then, he would give his orders as what they were to do. His word was law among them.

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An old Englishman, by the name of Sparrow, built the building for Choctaw boys near Armstrong, that was used for a hospital to care for soldiers. Over two hundred died there and were buried there. Dogs would dig up the bodies and carry them away.

When a member of an Indian family died, they would put the body in a cow-hide that they had dried, and hang it in a tree and leave it. When they began to make coffins they were hewed out of trees and the body placed in a shallow grave under the house. When they would move to another place, they would kneel by their dead and cry and cry.

Crime in those days was punished by death. If you were found guilty, you were turned loose without bond until the day of your execution. They were not hung, but shot.

Our shoes were made from Buf-hides, which my father would put in troughs and tan; making pins for the shoes out of hickory. Lasts would be made to fit the shoes. Our gloves were made of buckskin and sold for \$100.00 a pair. Caps were made from coon skin. Ropes to make into bridles, lariats, etc., were made from hair from horses and cattle.

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Their hair would be straightened out and put in rain water before using. Bridles would sell for \$50.00.

An old custom and belief was to place a rope around your pallet when sleeping out in the open and no insects or snakes would crawl over it to bother you.

Hats were woven from wheat and oat straw. Baskets were made from willow. The social life in my young days consisted of quilting-bees, corn-husking and fish-fries. If it was to be a quilting-bee party, we all went early and quilted all day, stopping at noon for a lovely meal then again in the evening. After the evening meal we would dance until late at night. If it was a fish-fry, the men would go to the place the night before and gather a weed with long roots which was called "Devils Shoe Strings." These were bruised with stones, then swished through the water until the water was permeated with the taste. This stupefied the fish. For a short time they became as if drunk and rose to the top of the water. The men would take sacks and swim in and fill them with fish, and the ones that were not gathered up would revive and swim away.

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The fish would be placed where the party was to be and early next day some would cut their heads off and some would dress them and then the women folks would take charge and the big fry would begin.

Baseball was a favorite game with the Indian boys.

I am one fourth Choctaw, and was born four miles from Durant in the old Mineral Bayou neighborhood of October 10, 1849. My parents moved to old Fort Washita. My early school days were spent near home. There was no school during the Civil War. After the war my father took me to Lebanon, Tennessee, and placed me in school as he was anxious for his children to receive an education. Unfortunately, his funds became short and I came home after seventeen months at school. When I returned to the Nation I worked at Wapanucka Academy, a Chickasaw school, as matron. After my father's death in 1870, we experienced many hardships. When 24 years old I met Madison Bouton, of Catskill, N. Y. We were married December 25, 1874. My husband was killed by an intoxicated Indian when my three children were small; my mother had also passed away. Several years later I married W. H. Bates, a railroad man, who died July 19, 1901.

I moved to Durant and built a small hotel on Main Street. It was a help to the town and trade was good. My health failed so I sold out and moved to Stoka but I only stayed there a short time and moved back to Durant. My children had married, so I found employment in the Calvin Institute as matron. I spent many happy days there. After I left there I moved on the east side of town in Durant and took up church work. The people were eager to be taught, and I feel that I did much good among them.

My three children are living:

Mrs. Annie Yarborough, Durant, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Nell Ingram, Ada, Oklahoma.

William Bouton, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

My grandfather was an English trader and my grandmother was a fullblood Choctaw. My parents had 13 children and raised 10 to be grown.

INDIAN DISHES
(Bohar)

Bohar was a delective condiment. It was made by beating hickory nuts and walnuts to a pulp in a ^{stone (?)} stove or wooden mortar. To this was added cracked parched corn flour. This was sifted to take away the husks. Sugar was added and thoroughly mixed. Cold water was added until the mass became the consistency of thick dough. It was served in horn or shell spoons and was considered the "Piece de resistance" of a meal.

(Abuncha)

Abuncha was the hard tack of the Nation. It was used to take on long hunts, and was made by the quantity of corn desired being soaked over night in just enough water to cover it to loosen the husks. Ashes of dried bean hulls were sifted and the ashes with dried beans were boiled until the beans were done. A stiff dough was made of the corn after it had been beaten while the beans remained whole. These were mixed in about equal quantities of meal and beans and wrapped in corn shucks, tied with hickory and put in a pot of water and boiled one hour.

This bread remained in the shucks until ready to be eaten. It kept indefinitely, being as good a year after as the day it was cooked.

THE INDIAN SONG
By Israel Folsom.

Land where the brightest waters flow,
Land where the loveliest forests grow
Where warriors draw the bow,
Native land, farewell.

He who made both stream and tree,
Made the white and red man free,
Gave the Indian home to be,
Mid the forest wild.

Have the waters ceased to flow?
Have the forests ceased to grow?
Why do our brothers bid us go
From our native home?

Where in infancy we played,
Where our happy wigwams made
Where our father's graves are laid
Must we leave them all?

White man, tell us, God on high,
So pure and just in yonder sky
Will not then His searching eye
See the Indian's wrong?

LULA AUSTIN
Field worker,
May 17, 1937,

"WHAT SHE REMEMBERS ABOUT SALT WORKS".

O'Netta Thompson, Giles Thompson's oldest daughter, married Julius Folsom, my brother.

Giles Thompson's salt works were the only salt works I knew. There were the several big pots there to boil your salt and some people took their own pots with them. They would boil all night and take the salt out in the morning and put on wagon sheets to dry. It would take two or three days to dry out. Had dogs to keep the cattle away.

Dr. Lindsey lived near the salt works and was the only Doctor.

While I was matron at Rock Academy, Chickasaw school at Wapanuka, William Bird was Superintendent, Mr. Stephenson, teacher, Miss Eddy of New York was manager. There were twenty-one students.

Charles Lombardy, a lawyer, came from Washington with Israel Folsom to attend the grand council of the Indians. All tribes were represented

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there and the members remained six weeks. Father employed him to talk to the tribes about organizing schools. There were thirteen interpreters there.

Mrs. Bates has a letter from Israel Folsom written from Washington to his son Emerson Folsom, in regard to Net Proceed Claim, dated March 27, 1808. *impossible*.

Peter Pitchlyan married Rudy Folsom, sister of Israel Folsom, my father.