



Interview with Mrs. Chaunicy Fields  
1330 Monta St., Muskogee, Okla.

Field Worker - Carl R. Sherwood  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
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I was born in Claremore, Indian Territory,  
February 22, 1879. My mother was Miss Jane Eliza-  
beth Cobb, born October 22, 1862, in Eddyville, Iowa.  
My father, Zachery Harlam, was born July 15, 1851.

My parents came to the Indian Territory in  
1875. My father was the first blacksmith in Clare-  
more and always shod the horses for the Dalton  
outlaws.

I went to school with Will Rogers in a one-room  
school-house; Will lived out on the ranch and rode  
his horse to school. Miss Betty Smith was our  
teacher and in later years she married Doctor Bushy-  
head, a Cherokee. My father paid two dollars per  
month for us to attend school.

In 1898, I married John Tripritt of Claremore,  
Oklahoma. My husband worked for my father in a  
general merchandise store. The Dalton gang of  
outlaws did not do any stealing in Claremore but  
had their hideout in a strip of heavy timber east

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of town, about where the bath houses are today.

I remember when I was a girl, an Italian came to town with a large black bear and a hand organ. The bear would dance for the school children, which was equal to a circus to us in the early days. The following year the same Italian came back with his bear. By this time the bear had grown very large and was unruly. The Italian wanted to sell him; my father bought the bear for ten dollars. He then placed the bear in a cage and fattened him until butchering time in the Winter. My father gave all his neighbors bear meat. He kept his beautiful black fur which he had an Indian tan, and used it for a lap robe in the buggy.

I came to Muskogee, in 1889, and rented a small frame building and opened a restaurant where Calhoun's Dry Goods Store now stands at the corner of Broadway and Second Street. At that time there were large shade trees on the lot.

My parents came to Muskogee in 1901 and my father went to work for the Reeves Machine Shop, which was

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located at that time about North Third and Fondulac Streets and was owned by Oscar Reeves, who was a brother of Lieutenant Ira L. Reeves. While working here my father was repairing the old city fire engine when a boiler exploded and killed him instantly. He was buried in Greenhill Cemetery.

I lost my first husband in 1900 and in 1906 I married Chauncy Fields, a Cherokee Indian, who was born November 29, 1879, about two and one-half miles east of Muskogee. He was a son of Richard and Manerva Fields. His father died when he was one year old. His mother moved to town and bought out the Aunt Betty Kirk Boarding House which was situated east of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad Station.

Chauncy Field's brother, William Fields, was a deputy Indian Police under Captain John C. West. He was sent, with other Indian deputies, three miles east of Checotah to arrest a negro outlaw of the Soda Springs District. On approaching the negro's house the negro recognized the deputies and knew

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they were after him. He opened his door and started firing his Winchester and in this battle, William Fields was killed. The negro was captured and placed in the Muskogee Jail.

In 1894, Chauncy's mother moved to a farm about three miles southwest of the Campbell Russell Ranch, where they farmed and raised livestock for several years. In 1900, Chauncy and his mother moved back to Muskogee and he went to work as a delivery boy for Petterman and Reeves Meat Market on North Main Street. He worked here for three years and went to work for the Patterson Mercantile Company, delivering groceries. A few years later he went to work for the Spaulding McElvain Company. For many years he worked for the American Express Company.