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

Field Worker's name Alene D. McDowell

This report made on (date) June 14, 1937 1937

1. Name Mrs. Evelyn Suagee-Maheras

2. Post Office Address 921 Armstrong, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 921 Armstrong, Bartlesville

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 12 Year 1894

5. Place of birth Afton, Indian Territory

6. Name of Father Joel Suagee Place of birth Oklahoma

Other information about father one-quarter Cherokee, buried in Okla.

7. Name of Mother Dora L. Suagee Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother Lives five miles south of Bartlesville

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 12.

Aleene D. McDowell  
Research Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
June 14, 1937

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EXPERIENCES OF A NATIVE  
DAUGHTER OF OKLAHOMA.  
Given by Mrs. Evelyn Maheras  
921 Armstrong Avenue  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Evelyn Afton Suagee-Maheras was born at Afton, Indian Territory, November 12, 1894.

Father - Joel Suagee, a quarter Cherokee, was born at Grove, Indian Territory, in 1871 and died at Bartlesville, Oklahoma, November 28, 1922. He is buried in the Silver Lake Cemetery <sup>near</sup> his allotment, south of Bartlesville.

Mother - Dova L. Gaither-Suagee, was born at Southwest City, Missouri, January 17, 1876. She is the daughter of Dr. Gaither, one of the first pioneer doctors in the Indian Territory. She and her mother, Mrs. Malinda Ballard, live on the Suagee allotment about five miles south of Bartlesville, at Silver Lake.

When I was four years old, I removed with my parents to a farm in the Indian Territory, across the state line from Coffeyville, Kansas. In 1899 we removed to a farm near the Kansas line, west of the first place we settled and

our nearest trading post was Edna, Kansas. The first school I attended was in a one room red brick building with a cupola on top for the bell. This school was located across the Kansas line and my father obtained a permit from the school board, for me to attend school in Kansas.

I can remember seeing the bullet holes in the buildings at Coffeyville, where the Dalton gang staged a losing fight after they had robbed two banks one morning. This happened <sup>in 1892,</sup> several years before our removal to this part of the territory, but it was still fresh in the minds of the people and I can remember hearing the story from many, and some who witnessed the raid. I have visited the Dalton's graves in the Coffeyville Cemetery when I was a child and remember they <sup>had</sup> a fence of pipe around the grave, with iron bows over the top.

In 1902 we removed to Bartlesville, in a covered wagon, and camped the first night near the

old Caney river ford located at the north end of Delaware avenue. That evening Arthur Armstrong and his wife rode over to the camp to meet us, as it was their custom to visit the camp and meet all the travelers and new comers. Mrs. Armstrong was riding a side saddle. Their daughter, Lucy, was my first playmate. The Armstrongs were Delaware Indians and were prominent pioneers, having built the first house south of Caney river, in what is now Bartlesville.

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lannom were among our early acquaintances, and their two daughters, Talala and Camille were also my playmates. The Lannoms were Cherokee and played a prominent part in the early history of Bartlesville. Their mother is now Mrs. Zora Lannom-Hait and fills a responsible office in the Indian Association of Oklahoma.

Arthur Armstrong added three additions to Bartlesville in the east part of the city, as Armstrong First, Second and Third Addition. When we came here there were two houses in the

Armstrong First Addition and our first home in Bartlesville was in one of these houses. We lived in town for two years, then removed to a farm south of town.

Early in 1891 the First Baptist Church was organized with about thirty charter members. Frank M. Overlees was the first Sunday school Superintendent, an office he filled for twenty-five years. Mr. Overlees died June 16, 1937, and was the last charter member of the church. He and his wife, Carrie Armstrong Overlees, were active members of the church until their death. Mrs. Overlees preceded him in death about two years ago. A building was erected on the present site of the First Baptist Church, at Fourth and Cherokee, which was destroyed by fire in 1905, but another was built immediately. It was in this building I attended Sunday school when I was a child.

I remember one Christmas we had an entertainment, and our Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Carrie Overlees, had trained us for the program. I gave a reading and Mr. Overlees complimented me highly

and gave me fifty cents. We had a large Christmas tree decorated with cotton, pop corn and colored paper and was lighted with candles.

While Santa Claus was giving the presents the tree caught fire, causing considerable excitement, but it was soon extinguished.

In the early days, we did not buy land. We only paid for the improvements on a place. Jim McCay traded for the John Sarcocie home south of Bartlesville and my father bought the improvements from him for \$1,000. This place ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> located at Silver Lake, five miles south of Bartlesville, where my mother and grandmother are now living.

Our home was a seven room, colonel type house, built by Uncle John Sarcocie, who was killed at the Silver Lake church while guarding the church during the services. He was killed when the church was attacked by Frank Rogers, George Shelley, an Osage named Akin and a Cherokee named Elmer Brown. This house burned in 1907; my father then built a six room frame house near the highway. Mr. Sarcocie hauled the lumber from Lawrence, Kansas, to build

the house that burned.

My father filed his family at Vinita for land and also registered my mother, who was an adopted citizen of the Cherokee tribe. She was married in time to hold land but was ruled out by one year and did not secure an allotment. Our allotment consisted of 330 acres, located south of Bartlesville at Silver Lake. I have the original deed to my 60 acres, issued by the United States Government. My roll number is 9820.

Silver Lake is quite a historical site in Washington County and our allotment took in all the noted historical scenery. The old Delaware Baptist Church was located about one-quarter mile east of the Silver Lake store on United States Highway #75, where we attended Sunday school and church. There was a subscription school taught in the church by Mrs. Carrie Overlees and ~~we~~<sup>I</sup> received my early education in this school.

The old church was blown away by a cyclone and another building was erected on the site where the



Hillcrest Country Club now stands; later the present Silver Lake Baptist Church was built one mile east of the location of the first building.

After I finished grade school at Silver Lake I stayed in the home of Dr. and Mrs. A.M. Bruce and attended high school at Bartlesville. When I was 14 years old I attended the Cherokee National Female Seminary at Tahlequah for three years. I was there in 190<sup>9</sup> when the seminary was sold to the State of Oklahoma by the Cherokee Indians, during Governor Haskell's administration. The seminary was sold for \$45,000. We were allowed to finish the term. This school is now known as Northeastern State Normal. The Cherokee National Female Seminary was the largest building ever erected by an Indian tribe.

While Charles Haskell was running for Governor, Mrs. Elinor Allen, Superintendent of the Seminary, gave a banquet in his honor and as we marched into the room we sang, "Haskell, Haskell, He's the man, We can't vote, But our sweethearts can." This hap-

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pened before we had women suffragettes, and we were about three hundred "boosters."

My father, Joel Suagee, taught a country school near Grove, in the Coosweecoowee District under Robert L. Owens, a Cherokee, who later became the first United States Senator of Oklahoma, and now lives in Washington, D.C. He taught all grades from the first to the eighth inclusive.

When I was 16 years old I married ~~to~~ Cicero Buford, son of Wallace Buford, the wealthiest real estate man in Bartlesville. We had one child, Robert Owen, who died with the whooping cough when he was six weeks old and is buried in the White Rose Cemetery at Bartlesville. My father named our son for his old friend, Senator Robert L. Owen. I lived with Mr. Buford for two years, and several years after our separation I married George Maheras.

The first big oil well in Washington County was drilled in 1909 on my allotment. Chester A.

Buzzard told my father he was broke and had nothing except a string of tools and wanted to drill the well. My father gave him the contract and J.J. Freiburger financed the deal and a 500 barrel well was brought in. This gave Mr. Buzzard a new start and he is now a wealthy man. He lives in Tulsa and Mr. Freiburger lives at 425 Wyandotte in Bartlesville.

My father leased 20 acres of my sister, Mad-lyon's allotment to an oil company for \$3,000, the largest bid registered in Washington County. My father was the first client to call on Charlie Pennal for legal advise when he established his law office in Bartlesville. He was my father's lawyer for many years.

My maternal grandfather was Dr. <sup>Harrison</sup> Gaither, the first pioneer doctor in the Indian Territory. The Indians usually paid ~~him~~ him in food and wood instead of money, and my mother has told of having ten venison hams in the smoke house many times.

When I was a child my father gave me an

Indian pony, which I named "Shorty" and I spent many happy hours riding him.

My father was personally acquainted with Tams Bixby, first commissioner of the Dawes Commission and had many business dealings with him.

My paternal grandfather, David Suagee, was sheriff of the Cherokee Nation, in the Going Snake District for two terms. He boarded his prisoners and my grandmother cooked for them. His brother, Stan, who was an ex-sheriff, had a fight with an Indian at Southwest City, Missouri, and killed the man with his pocket knife. He hid out for several months before my grandfather located his place of concealment, in a barn. He then sent a note to Uncle Stan, asking him to surrender and stating that he did not want any gun play. When Uncle Stan came out of the barn he had his gun drawn but when my grandfather told him to drop it he obeyed and surrendered. My grandfather always said this was his hardest task while he was in office.

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My father was engaged to Mary West, an Indian girl before he met my mother. One evening she met him at the school house, where he was teaching, and walked home with him. In those days when people were out they usually carried a gun with them and when he took her home, he carried his shot gun. ~~with him~~. He leaned the gun against a gate post while he opened the gate, when he turned, he knocked the gun over, discharging it. Miss West was shot in the leg, causing considerable trouble. She never regained her health from this accident and died two years later with a fever. I do not remember if she had malarial or typhoid. When the shooting accident occurred her brothers would have killed my father, but she explained the accident and cleared him of all the blame. My father did not marry for several years after her death.

My grandfather objected to my mother's marriage and they eloped from Wyandotte to Afton on horseback and were married under the Cherokee law by a Justice of the Peace at Afton.

I have never lived outside of the Indian Territory and Oklahoma. Two years ago I made a trip to Europe and was gone six months, but I will admit I was homesick for my native land and was glad to return.

Both my maternal and paternal grandparents were pioneers in the Indian Territory and my maternal grandmother, Mrs. Malinda Ballard, is 86 years old and lives with my mother, five miles south of Bartlesville. She has good health and is active for her age. She raises chickens and garden and enjoys being in the open air.