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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. W. A. MAYES
Salina, Oklahoma

FIELD WORKER PAULINE SMITH

Mrs. W. A. Mayes was born at Salina, Oklahoma, at the home of her uncle, Dr. John Ross, an Indian chief. She was born March 25, 1865, just after the war. Their original home was near Claremore, but her mother wanted to live with her uncle, the doctor.

Mrs. Mayes' grandfather, Eliza Hicks, was one of the council men. He would go to Washington to get barrels of flour, sugar, blankets and trunkets to trade with the Indians. He would get ponies and hides in exchange for supplies.

Mr. Hicks' home was located on what is now Claremore's Cemetery. He was buried in his garden and was the first grave made there. His grave has a monument erected and has a short history engraved on it.

Mrs. Mayes said her mother was in the drive to the Indian territory at the age of eight years. They came in wagons, carts, riding horses, and many people walked. They brought their treasures and everything else they could bring. It was so sad then having to leave their home. The treaty they signed said this new country they were coming to was to be their home as long as grass grew and water flowed. They were willing to face hardships to have a land all their own.

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At night while making the drive, John Ross would talk to them and tell them about this new land all their own. A number of their tribe were taken sick and died on the road. They would stop the march for three days and mourn their death and then start again. They were greatly impressed with their new home. It had plenty of game and fish and Oh: Such a beautiful home. They loved it.

There were six districts of the Indian Territory, Coowee-Schoo-Wee, named after the chief--Flint--Sequoyah--Saline--Tablequah--Goingsnake. It was easier to have these districts and have a chief for each district and then they could manage them better.

The home of John Ross was sold to the Cherokee Nation after he died. It was remodeled and made into an Orphans Home for Cherokee Children. It was at the Orphans Home that John Howard Payne wrote the song of "Home Sweet Home". The Orphans Home burned.

The treaty that gave Oklahoma to the Indians was broken by the vote of the people. A written treaty was taken to John Ross, Chief, to sign. He was in bed sick, at this time but he read it over and then tore it into small pieces. He could see his home and their rights taken from them and know

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that they were helpless. He died before the Indian Territory
became a state.