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Hazel B. Greene
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Interview with Frances E. Holley
Swink, Oklahoma.

I just don't know one thing about my parents. I was raised by the Indians and was told that I was born in 1877, near old Shawneetown in what is now McCurtain County, and that I had a brother, but I never knew what became of him or my parents and don't even know my father or mother's names; they did say my name was Frances Brown.

Mr. Henry C. Harris had me put in the Presbyterian Mission School at Wheelock for orphan Indian girls and as I was supposed to be about one-eighth Choctaw Indian I was permitted to make that my home. I went there when I was eight years old and I stayed there the year round for ten years.

When I went to Wheelock, Parson Edwards was the Missionary and remained there the whole ten years I was there. He lived in what we called the Parsonage, a two-story house made of lumber that is still standing, and when I left school I went to that parsonage and made it my home

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for about six months. We had to hold services in an old boxed building made of rough boxing planks, because the old stone church was grown up with vines and bushes and trees that extended above the walls. I was told that the old church was built in 1846 but that it was ruined in time of the War. In 1885, I believe, they began re-building the old church; I don't remember where they got the roofing which was of tin, like that on the school building.

They told me that a long time before I went to Wheelock it was quite a settlement, besides the school. It was a sort of a central part of the community and a good many people lived close around there. Jimmie Gardner had a store in the corner of the school yard and everybody for miles around did their trading there.

W. B. Robe was the first Superintendent that I remember. His son, R. C. Robe, was next, then Ed H. Wilson, then a Dr. Ellis from Clarksville, Texas. They were all white men except Ed Wilson, he was Choctaw Indian. At the end of school terms we had what were called "Exhibitions".

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All of the larger girls would get new white dresses for the occasion, the little ones just had clean print ones. You see, times were harder then than now. We were all poor orphans and could not get costumes every few weeks, we had to take just whatever the missionaries sent us. We got a box every fall, which contained winter underwear and coats and winter dresses, then at Christmas time we got another box filled with dolls, handkerchiefs and candy and ribbons and nuts like none that grew here. And those teachers and superintendents saw that every child got a hair ribbon, a handkerchief, some candy and nuts and a doll. Sometimes there would be a calico dress around for us but usually we had hand-me-down dresses. That was our home, we stayed there the year round. We didn't know anything else.

There were several fine springs around Wheelock Academy but a well furnished water for the school. They tell me that the most of those springs are filled in now.

I remember the Reverend James Dyer came to Wheelock and made talks to us several times, sometimes when we would

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have a Christmas tree or an exhibition. His son, Jimmie, married Laura Clay and her sister Ida Clay married James Costillow. They were Indian girls and sisters of Abner Clay who was killed some way, I have forgotten how though. I believe Ida is dead. It has been so long since I have seen or heard of a lot of my girlhood friends.

My claim to Indian blood was recognized by the authorities and I filed on land south of Swink; I believe in 1904. At the time that I filed, and for several years thereafter, there were signs of foundations of many buildings and I was told that the original Doaksville was built there, that is about a couple of miles south of Swink.

I don't remember much about old Shawneetown for I left there when I was so very young, I remember that Mr. Joe Briarly had a store there but that is about all I do recall.

After I had been at Parson Edwards about six months I went to Antlers and stayed a while in the home of Walter D. Parks, United States Marshal, but I liked it better in this country so went to the home of Dave R. Swink, a white man who married a Choctaw Indian girl, a daughter of Henry C. Harris,

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whose name was Lena Harris. Dave Swink lived in an old Mission which was about fifteen miles west of Wheelock, I don't know who had built that old Mission but Parson Keith had at one time been the Missionary who lived in it and held services there and married folks there.

That old Mission was made of hewn logs, put together with wooden pegs and had almost perfect joinings. There were two big rooms with a hall between and a stairway going up from the hall to two rooms above. There were two side-rooms at the backs of the big rooms downstairs they were of plank, and the odd thing was that there were four chimneys of native stone, One for each room, at the end of the rooms. Of course, each chimney at the ends furnished fireplaces downstairs and upstairs both. That was indeed a lovely old house and it is still standing and in a fair state of preservation. Even the smokehouses and hen-houses were of hewn logs. It was then located on what was called the Wheelock and Doaksville road and I was told that it was built before the Civil War but I never knew by whom. Mrs. Annie Tafée-Arnote of Antlers, might possibly know. I was

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told that Robert Frazier owned the old Mission at one time, after Parson Keith lived there and before Dave Swink bought it.

I was married from this old mission, when I was twenty years old, to James Holly, a white man who was raised in Texas but born in Louisiana. He was a farmer and after we were married we moved to Dave Swink's farm place two miles west of Swink, forty-one years ago. We lived there and right around and in Swink ever since until his death two years ago; he is buried here and I guess I will be laid away here, too. We lived on the Swink farm when the railroad was put through here and the town of Swink was built in 1902.

Back in the pioneer days here and up to just about twenty-five years ago, when a parson died the neighbors bathed them and laid them out and the men folks made the coffin; the women usually lined and trimmed the inside of the coffin with lace. There was no sign of a cemetery at the old Doaksville townsite, but there were still old bits of the rock sidewalks in my field there, a mile or so south of Swink, in 1904; I have seen those myself and I often wondered where the cemetery of the town was.

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I got to go to Wheelock to church once after I married and once when I lived at Mr. Swink's. That was the only church I knew until long after I was married. I never went to the Doaksville church; maybe there was one there, I don't know. I will never forget those old songs, especially "Amazing Grace" which stuck in my memory because I saw a young Indian girl go up to the altar and kneel and was sprinkled while they sang that song, that was at Wheelock.

We used to go miles and miles horseback to church, unless it was a camp meeting, then we went in wagons and took a trunkful of clothes and lots of food and stayed for weeks, sometimes. I never went to parties and I never went to a dance in my life.