

HAMPTON, EMMA THOMPSON.

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Hazel B. Greene,  
Journalist,  
February 15, 1938.

An Interview with Mrs. Emma Thompson Hampton,  
507 South Broadway, Hugo, Oklahoma.

I was born December 4, 1880, in the Box Spring Community three miles north of Doaksville in the Choctaw Nation. My father's name was "Pink" Thompson; he was born near Doaksville and my mother was named Lucy and she was born in the Chickasaw Nation.

My father and mother are both buried in the cemetery at the Box Spring Church, about three miles north of the old town of Doaksville. Box Spring community was made up of negroes. We had our school and church and Sunday School and a big cemetery. It was not far from the Nonnemontubbi neighborhood, was about three miles, and we could hear Captain Nonnemontubbi beating a big drum every evening and every morning. When he would first begin it seemed like we could not hear it so plainly but as he would keep on beating the sound seemed to just roll to us. We heard it all of our lives and paid no attention to it until we got to going away to school and when we would come home for vacations we would

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be listening for the sound of that drum beating up at Captain Nonnemontubbi's. He used to come to our house and sit for hours and we children would gather wild strawberries and give to him. He told us the Choctaw name for strawberries. We would pick flowers for him too. After he was gone we would catch ourselves listening for the beat of that old drum. He must have been a soldier in the army. Everyone called him Captain.

My mother was born a slave in the Chickasaw Nation. She didn't know who her father was. She looked like a full blood Indian, but her mother was a negress. Grandma said that once in slavery time she was sold away from her two babies. My mother was the youngest and she was just a little baby when her mother was sold and taken away. Some Indians kept the babies. They might have been Grandma's owners, anyway they kept the babies until they were freed and it was not long. Then Grandma came back to her babies in the Chickasaw Nation and decided that she would go down to Doaksville, in the Choctaw Nation, where she had a cousin. His name was Mose and he was a slave of the Yakhambi Indians, who were

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Chickasaws and had settled near Doaksville, probably when they all came from Mississippi, while the owners of my grandma went on west. Mose went by the name of Mose Thompson, and when he was freed he settled on a place northwest of Doaksville about three miles and to this good day that old cleared place is called the old 'Mose' field.

Grandma bundled up her little belongings and her two babies and set out to walk to Doaksville. There was a military road all the way but it was not a very good road and not much traveled either, so one evening late she got off the road. She was lost. She said she whooped and hollered thinking that somebody would answer but they didn't. Finally a panther answered her and she climbed a tree and taking the biggest child up first she left the baby on the ground because she knew it was too young to be scared enough to run off before she could get down again and get it. She tied the children in the tree top with quilt tops and they stayed there all night. About day-break she heard chickens crowing and located the direction

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and come daylight she got down and went to the house. The people kept her and the children there all of that day and fed and cared for them, then the next day she "made" it to Doaksville. Grandma said that if that panther did come along there it must not have been hungry because it didn't bother her nor the children. The reason she tied the children in the tree was to keep them from falling out when they went to sleep.

I attended school at Box Spring School until I was about twelve years old, then I was sent to Oak Hill Academy. It was a boarding school just for girls then. Before I went there and after I went there it was for boys and girls. Mr. McBride was Superintendent when I went there, but he died. The McBrides had five children, Howard, George, Greene, Rachael and Ruth. They all went off to boarding schools while I was there.

I was at Oak Hill Academy four years. Four years there entitled a student to a scholarship, or good grades entitled one to a scholarship in less time. It took me four years to get mine. I was so slow to learn. When I went to school

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there the main buildings were frame buildings. There were some old log houses there, which had been school buildings, but they were used for a laundry and storehouse when I was there. One of the main buildings was in the way of the railroad when it came through and had to be torn down.

At Oak Hill Academy we played ball, checkers and charades and other games and sometimes Mrs. Haymaker and Mrs. McBride would take us picnicking and sometimes take us clear to the watermill down on Clear Creek. We would take our lunch and stay all day. It was only about two miles and we would enjoy the walk. The water mill was owned by Mrs. John Wilson, the mother of Johnny, Eddie and Raphael and Willie Wilson, all men who were prominent in the affairs of the Choctaw Nation. All of the teachers at the Academy were Missionaries, white people from the North. There was a small store and post office about a mile away, called Clear Creek. We went there for small purchases, but all the big supplies were freighted from Goodland station on the railroad.

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We had chapel services every morning on week days. Then Sunday morning we had Sunday School and church and after noon Bible study until we had learned a certain number of Bible verses by heart. Then at four o'clock we had prayer meeting. They fed us pretty well when I was there. We had stewed beef for dinner lots of days, corn bread and sometimes beans, but not often. On Sundays we sometimes had chicken and dumplings and pies and cakes and on Thanksgiving and Christmas the school gave big dinners for the children over the country. That was the only time that boys were there while I attended school there. We were not permitted to have beaux only when we were home during vacation.

For the exhibition at the closing of school each girl had a white lawn dress for the exercises, then they were given blue uniforms to wear home. These uniforms were usually of blue chambray, trimmed with white braid.

I attended Oak Hill Academy four terms and then when I was about sixteen I went to the Tuscaloosa Academy up about

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Talihina. Henry Nail was Superintendent. My father tied my grip full of clothes to his saddle horn and put me on another horse and took me to Goodland to the train and there I had my first train ride when I went to Talihina. I went there three years, but I never graduated. I was too slow to learn. But I liked to go to school. I got out of chopping cotton and other field work. My daddy farmed and raised stock and rode the range for Mr. George Pritchard.

Oak Hill Academy was a school for negroes on Clear Creek about nine miles east of Doakville, which operates now under the name of Elliott Hall. But they have negro superintendents and teachers now. Tuscaloosa Academy up close to Talihina was abolished because of lack of funds, and was used for a residence for years before it was finally destroyed by fire. The Henry Nail who was superintendent when I was there was part negro and part Choctaw. Another thing I remember was my daddy hauling cotton to Fort Smith to sell it after it had been ginned and baled somewhere about Doakville. I think that Colonel Sim Folsom had a cotton gin at about the mouth of Kiamichi River. My grandmother who walked from the Chickasaw Nation to Doakville was named Mary Sifax, and she was never married.