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MRS. ELINOR BOUDINOT MEIGS, Informant
Ft. Gibson. 3/2-4, 37

-Jas. S. Buchanan

I was the fourth child of William Pean Boudinot and Caroline Fields Boudinot. Born March 8, 1862 in Illinois District, Cherokee Nation. Father was the son of Elias Boudinot, a fullblood Cherokee and Harriot Gold Boudinot, a white woman. My mother was the daughter of Thomas Fields and Nancy Downing Fields, both Cherokees. She was born in Tennessee, reared in the Cherokee Nation and educated in Dwight Mission.

I was only about one year of age when my father moved the family to the Choctaw Nation to escape the unsafe condition that existed in the Cherokee Nation brought on by the civil war. Father would have made this move earlier had he not been prevented by the serious illness of his cousin, Susan Candy Hill, who was bedfast with tuberculosis. On the evening following the death and burial of his cousin our home was raided by a band of Indians that had joined the northern side, known as the Pin Indians, who robbed the place of the most of our stock and much personal belongings, at the same time father was away from the house making arrangements to get the family away. He secured an old ferry boat and hired James Roger (who was the grandfather of "Jimmie" Rogers of Muskogee) and a man by the name James Lovett to help him get his family and what personal belongings they could on the boat, which they did and under the cover of darkness floated down the Arkansas River to Webbers Falls, where, with the assistance of friends he secured a wagon and an ox team with which he made his way into the Choctaw Nation where the family resided until after the close of the war.

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I remember my mother telling of a peculiar incident that happened during the raid that the Pin Indians made upon our home. She said father had a large amount of gold hid in an old leather satchel hanging on the wall, and during the search they were making of the house, an Indian reached up and taken hold of the old satchel, and just as he did so, his attention was attracted by a beautiful bright colored blanket that hung near, he left the old satchel and took the blanket and a side saddle that was hanging by it and walked out of the house, leaving father's money as though they were not looking for it.

At the time of the civil war there yet existed a factional feeling that originated in Georgia between the Ross and Ridge Boudinot factions prior to the moving of the Cherokees from east of the Mississippi river to the Indian Territory, and caused the assassination of my grandfather, Elias Boudinot, Major Ridge and his son John Ridge on June 20, 1839, and as my father was a southern sympathizer the civil war furnished an opportunity for renewal of persecutions by the opposing faction. For that reason and the safety of the family was the cause of my father leaving the Cherokee Nation during the civil war.

When he considered it safe for the family he started on the return trip to the old home in the Cherokee Nation. All of our possessions in a wagon drawn by an ox team. We crossed the Canadian river at the old Tom Starr place where my brother Frank Boudinot was born while there in camp August 20, 1866.

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I never attended public schools as my early education was attained at home being taught by my mother until I was fourteen years of age. I was then placed in the Cherokee Female Seminary at Tahlequah, graduating in 1881. I taught in the grade schools and Cherokee schools for about ten years.

I was married to John H. Meigs September 2, 1890 and seven children were born to us as follows;

Frank Boudinot Meigs, Born August 26, 1891.

Carrie Mary Meigs, Born April 14, 1893.

Charles Ross Meigs, Born March 25, 1894.

Elinor Boudinot Meigs, Born April 26, 1899.

John Cornelius Meigs, Born March 2, 1901.

Return Johnathan Meigs, Born May 10, 1903.

Annie Stapler Meigs, Born December 15, 1907.

JOHN H. MEIGS. The great-grandfather of John H. Meigs was Chief John Ross of the Cherokees. His grandmother was Jane Ross, the daughter of Chief Ross, married to Return Johnathan Meigs about 1827, before the Cherokees moved west of the Mississippi. His father, John Ross Meigs was born in the Cherokee Nation November 30, 1839. He was reared in the Tahlequah District and educated in the Cherokee public schools and an advanced school at Cane Hill, Arkansas. Was married to Mary Elizabeth Freeman, a Cherokee, October 6, 1858. Nine children were born to that union, John H. Meigs being the oldest child, born September 30, 1859 in the eastern part of the Cherokee

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Following recipes given by Mrs. Meigs.

CON SKER.--(DRIED corn)

This recipe was used by the Indians in preserving green corn for the winter.

Take good tender roasting ears and pull shuck from ear just enough to inspect for worms and clean ear and shuck of silks, then place shucks back in original position and tie tips of shuck with a piece of shuck blade, then place in boiling water and cook for one hour. Soon as corn is cool enough to handle, turn the shuck back and tie the tips together, forming a loop, so the ears can be strung on a pole and hung up to dry. To prepare to eat, shell the dry corn off the cob, boil until tender and season to taste.

DOG-HEAD

Carefully remove shucks from tender roasting ears, cut the corn from the cobs, and after the shucks have been cleaned of silks, form back in original shape and fill about half full with the corn and tie the top of the shuck with a shuck blade, then place in boiling water and cook for about two hours.

When done and the shuck removed the corn will be cooked into a firm pone with a flavor all its own. Shape, large at one end tapering at the other, hence the name, dog-head.

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BROAD SWORD

A grit, grated from green corn that has grown too hard for roasting ears. Beans that has been hulled before they have thoroughly matured, boil until tender, mix beans and corn grit and enough of the juice of the beans to make a dough, work into pones about four inches long, two inches wide and one inch thick. Wrap in green corn blades with the center stem of the blade removed and tie securely with the tough edge taken from corn blades. Boil for one hour.

PRESERVATION

Mrs. Meigs has a feather bed made of duck feathers that was brought west by her grandfather and grand-mother Fields when the "Old Settlers" came to the Territory in the year of 1834. This bed was also included in the few personal belongings that her father was able to take with him in his flight with the family from the Cherokee Nation in 1863. The feathers are in perfect condition after being in use more than a century.

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GAME AND OTHER RESOURCES THE INDIAN ONCE HAD.

I can remember when there were dense canebrakes in the river lowlands which afforded wonderful winter range for cattle, also a shelter for the stock from the severe winter weather and a refuge for game. There were also wild fruit in abundance, such as wild plums, strawberries, dewberries, blackberries, raspberries and huckleberries. Game was plentiful, such as deer, turkey and prairie chicken. I remember an incident that happened when I was about seventeen years of age, one evening as the family was engaged in the evening meal on the back porch of our old home eight miles south of Ft. Gibson, a large panther came walking around the smokehouse about forty feet from us, and as the dogs went into a tantrum at the sight of the animal, it turned and dashed away into the forest.

The prairie grass in those days were as tall as a person's shoulder and grew in every nook that was not covered with trees, and it was free and open range for stock. But that also, like everything else we once had, is gone.