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An interview with Lilah D. Lindsey, at her home,
516 N. Frisco, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

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By - Effie S. Jackson, Field Worker.

July 30, 1937.

My parents were born in Alabama of Scotch ancestry. My father, John Denton (born 1830) was Scotch and Cherokee. My mother, Susan McKellop (born 1833) was Scotch and Creek. Their parents brought them during the 30's to the Creek Nation. The McKellops settled on Blue Creek about 12 miles west of Muskogee. My uncle, Jim McKellop, had a large ranch about six miles northwest of our home. The Dentons lived near Chelsea. After their marriage, my parents lived in the Blue Springs area. I was the youngest of six; four died in infancy; one later in life.

My father passed away when I was three. My memory of my mother, Susan McKellop Denton, is a picture of one devoting her life to her fellow man. Gifted in nursing and healing arts she spent all her years in service to others. She died when I was sixteen. I attended the Tullahassee Mission and I remember although I was ready to enter at eight, twelve was the lowest age entrance. Augusta Robertson (sister of Alice) was my teacher.

At sixteen I entered Highland Institute, Hillsboro,

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Ohio. I graduated with honors in 1883, the first Creek Indian girl to finish that school. I knew only the Creek language when I entered, but the English language seemed like my mother tongue. The spring before my graduation I was appointed by the Home Mission Board of Schools at New York to teach at Wealaka (to which place the old Tullahassee Mission had been removed). From there to Coweta Mission, and then three years in the mission school at Tulsa. (I had married Col. L. W. Lindsey at Wealaka Mission in 1884.)

I am writing in detail my school experiences. This article will cover the founding, activities and school life at Tullahassee Mission, Wealaka Mission, Coweta Mission and Tulsa's early mission school. Dr. Loughridge told me the story of his struggles to found a mission school; how he went to Coweta, a young missionary full of zeal to work for the good of the Indians. But the Creeks said: "No, No white man's religion." Loughridge said: "If I can't preach, may I teach?" Grudgingly they agreed. So he started a school in his one-room cabin. Realizing that by teach-

ing he could preach, training the young generation, he decided to devote his life to that. But he must have a companion to help him in this missionary work. So back East he went to ask his Mt. Holyoke sweetheart to become his wife and with him devote her life to the welfare of the Indian. In my article I will tell the story as Dr. Loughridge told me, the founding of Tullahassee, the struggle during the War, the work of the Robertsons, my correspondence with them, Tullahassee after the War, Wealaka Mission and Coweta Mission. When I have completed my history of 'Mission Life from 1850 to 1900', I would like to personally send the copy to Dr. Grant Foreman. I have never told the story of those days and now I realize the historical value of my experiences. It will be a pleasure to me to write this article for him.

I came to Tulsa in 1886 as a teacher at the Presbyterian Mission school, where the Coaden Building is today at Fourth and Boston. I had occasion in a report I gave to count the number of people living here then, ~~by actual count there were two hundred and fifty, not~~ families, but men, women and children. No civic pride

manifested itself as cattle, horses, cows and pigs roamed the streets at will. People sat on their front "stoops", ate their watermelons, and threw the rinds to the obliging pigs in the street. There was the town-pump about half way across the street between Hall's store at northwest corner of First and Main and Archer's at northeast corner.

My greatest interest as years went on was working among the poor. A struggling starving group of people had formed a tent-town settlement near where the Sand Springs railway crosses Archer today. Deserted mothers, deserted children, the sick and the dying, were always with us. I always went in, happy and jelly, and knelt down and prayed and then still talking slipped a look into the larder, always to find it empty, though they would not tell me. Then I would turn my little horse back to town with my list of staples. From store to store I went and I only asked for one article from each store. Then loaded up with flour, beans, rice, etc., I returned to fill the larder. I was poor myself, my husband was a contractor, and could not give money, but I could give

my time. God gave me no children, he must have meant for me to care for those he gave others. I have taken seventeen into my home and sent them out equipped to help themselves.

Of all my activities in the past years one stands out quite distinctly, that was getting the Tulsa city commission to establish the office of police matron. Realizing from my work among derelict women the need for this, I approached each commissioner and received his approval in advance, I even determined who was to make the motion, and who was to second it. The morning of the meeting came, and I headed my delegation of women; I remember Mrs. D. A. Wickizer was one of them. The speeches were made, the motion made, seconded, and passed and the office established. Then the question arose for much discussion as to who was to serve. I arose and introduced a woman I felt was fitted for the work and she was chosen. This was on Friday and Monday morning, Tulsa's first police matron was on the job.

I am not as active as I used to be, but it is a pleasure in these last years to find that I can still

render service. About a year ago Mrs. Phelan of Oklahoma City wrote me asking my aid in a state service. Mrs. Phelan, as you may remember, made and presented the historical quilt to Governor Marland. She wrote that she was heading a movement to have a bronze bust of Wiley Post made to be placed in the State Historical Building, and the cost would be two thousand five hundred dollars. She asked that I obtain half the sum from the eastern half of the state. I expected to obtain this in small contributions; so to start I wrote a personal letter to Frank Phillips at Bartlesville, a friend and admirer of Post. Imagine my pleasure and surprise to receive a check for the entire amount.
