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Nettie Cain,
Investigator,
Feb. 23, 1938.

Interview With Eliza Washington,
Holdenville, Oklahoma.

I was born nine miles east of Holdenville in 1871.

My father was Pearo Bruner and my mother was Agnes Bruner.

Father was born in Alabama and was brought to the Indian Territory by William Bruner, a Creek Indian, as a slave.

Mother was born in the Cherokee Nation and was a slave under Landrum, a full blood Cherokee Indian.

Father served as blacksmith and when the Civil War began he went north to Kansas and was stationed at Fort Scott, Kansas. A short time later he was sent to Fort Gibson and worked in a blacksmith shop, shoeing horses for the Union Army. While he was stationed at Fort Gibson there was one battle near the fort.

After the close of the war Father settled near Muskogee. About two years later I moved to Seminole Nation, near Brunertown (now Konawa).

At this time the people had very little to eat, sometimes just parched corn. The men would kill squirrels and

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cook corn without any salt. Farming was mostly of something to eat, beans, corn, sweet potatoes, rice and some cotton. The women would plant the rice and work it with hoes. The birds were very bad after the rice so the children had to keep watch over the rice field after it began to head. The women would cut the rice with their butcher knives, then they had a hollow stump they would thrash the heads in and a fan made by the Indians of small cane was used to fan the husk from the rice. Corn was soaked in water until soft then dried and put on a rock and mashed until fine enough to make bread. Very little of the cotton was grown, just enough for the family's clothes. The cotton was seeded by hand, spun into thread and then woven into cloth. All hose were knitted by hand and for gloves the men would kill squirrels and tan their pelts to make the palms of the gloves. Cowhides and buffalo hides were tanned and used for quilts and rugs. When they didn't tan soft they were used for rugs.

Father owned three teams, one ox team and two mule and horse teams. He would go to Eufaula and haul flour and other groceries back for the other natives, it would take

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from five to six days to make the trip. Very few Indians bought shoes, they would make moccasins from squirrel hides and then make bootees from cow and buffalo hides.

I attended school three years at Tallahassee Mission, eight miles north of Muskogee. Mr. Durant was principal and taught Mathematics and Miss Oram taught English. The students called her Mother of Tongues. Miss Madarn taught music and Miss Louis taught the primary. Mrs. Turner was matron and Mr. Turner had charge of the stock and farming. The students would go to the mission the first of September and help with the canning of the fruit and other work and school began about the second week in October. Sarah Jackson (colored) was cook. Very few of the students ever went home on a visit during the school term; sometimes the father would come to see them about mid-term.

There were six tables in the dormitory, so six girls a week would work in the dining room taking turns; each girl was responsible for the table she served and had to keep everything in order. The girls were taught music and sewing when not on duty in the dining room. At first

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Wetumka was their postoffice, later Fentis, which was seven miles southeast of Holdenville.

John Marks and John Hulsey owned a store and grist mill. Jim Alexander worked for them as clerk in the store and John Hulsey ran the gristmill. This was about 1893. Holdenville was staked off for a townsite in 1894.