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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Marice H. Anderson.

This report made on (date) 1937

1. Name Arthur Miers.

2. Post Office Address Isabel Valley, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) East Charles.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 26 Year 1877

5. Place of birth Arkansas on the line of Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation.

6. Name of Father Thomas Miers Place of birth

Other information about father deceased

7. Name of Mother Mary Ann Oakley Place of birth

Other information about mother deceased.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4.

STORY TOLD BY
MR. ARTHUR MIEARS.

I was born ^{January} January 23, 1827, in Arkansas, on the line of the Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation.

I was well acquainted with Jefferson Gardner, who was at one time Governor of the Choctaw Nation. He lived on Mountain Fork Creek at old Eagle town, in a two-story house; and in front of his home was the Choctaw Indian Court house. It was a small building about sixteen by twenty feet. Governor Gardner held court once a month. He had a whipping post at this court house and when anyone received the sentence to be whipped, the governor would pick some one to do the whipping, and when he sentenced some one to be shot, the governor would let the one that was going to be shot pick anybody he wanted to shoot him. The governor's deputy would set the one to be shot on a big rock just a short distance from the court house, and paint a red cross over his heart and whoever was picked to do the shooting, even if he picked his own brother, would shoot him; but if he missed the first shot, the Governor would let him go free. These were the Choctaw Indians.

Governor Harris was the governor before Governor Gardner. Governor Harris lived about ten miles south of Idabel, and while he was Governor of the Choctaw Nation, he gave a white man a half bushel of gold to marry his daughter.

*There was
no such
Choctaw
governor*

I have seen the Choctaw Indian women bring cotton to the gin. They would be riding a pony and have a sack of cotton on the pony with them, it was all the pony could do to carry the woman and the sack of cotton. There wouldn't be any men with them at all. They didn't raise much cotton or corn. About five acres would be all the cultivated land they would work. The women did the farming. And the men did the fishing and hunting.

There were plenty of fish in the creeks in that part of the Choctaw Nation, plenty of deer, bear and turkey.

I have run with the Choctaw Indian boys and have gone to their dances and ball games, fished and hunted with them. I have been to their homes. In those days they mostly lived in log houses, dug-outs and sod houses. They wouldn't have much furniture in their houses, some of them wouldn't have any at all. They would cook out in the yard on a small fire place fixed and they slept on the floor or out in the yard on a blanket or deer and bear skins. They would have a few pots to cook with. They never raised anything to sell, except a little cotton. These were the full-bloods.

The mixed breed Indians were big cattle raisers or big farmers.

I remember a tree about fifty yards from Governor Gardner's home. It was twenty-seven feet around it and I have counted thirty-five holes in this old tree and honey-bees coming out and going in at all the holes. This tree

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belonged to Governor Gardner, and he would not allow it to be cut down. I have not been to the old home place of Governor Gardner in years, and I don't know if this old tree is still there or not.

While he was Governor of the Choctaw Nation, I have been to his home and eaten with him, and his wife was a fine cook. She was a Choctaw Indian woman. Governor Gardner wasn't a full-blood Indian, he was about a half Choctaw and white, and he was a fine man to talk to, The first night I stayed at his home, he read his law book to me. I was at his home on several trips and found him studying his law books. He told me about different Indian men he had to sentence to be shot. He said, sometimes he had given them ten days time, so they could visit their people before they were to be killed, and on the day set for them to be there they came.

There were lots of bee trees then it wasn't any trouble at all to go out in the woods and find a bee tree, cut it down, and get two or three dish pans of honey out of it.

In those days the woods were full of ponies, they were called the little Choctaw ponies.

When one of the Indians died their family would bury

him and two days later the family and friends would meet and have what they called, "Cry day",. They would go to where they had buried the dead one and sit down around the grave and cry all day and if the dead was buried on any of their farms there would be no work done on that farm for four days. The Indians in that part of the territory would count their riches by the the amount of ponies they owned.

I have danced with the Choctaw Indians. They would have a big fire and they would go around stomping and slinging their heads and hollering hi ho, or that is what it sounded like to me.

I was married to Miss Mary Brantley in 1895, the daughter of Huston Brantley, a pioneer settler of the Indian Territory, Choctaw Nation.

I now live in Pauls Valley, Okla. where I run a second-hand store.