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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ETHEL HIBBEN CARTER
105 North D. St., Hugo, Okla.

By
Hazel B. Greene.

My father was Thomas Dixon Hibben, a white man from Arkansas. He was clerk of the Supreme Court of the Choctaw Nation till the tribal laws were abolished. Then he was a County Commissioner of Choctaw County for years. Sometimes he would be gone from home for months at Supreme Court. He died Jan. 1st, 1916.

My mother was Mary Oakes, daughter of Thomas E. Oakes and Harriet Everidge Oakes. Mother was a sister to Lem, Dock, (Joel E.), George, Tom and S. L. Oakes. She died November 13, 1832, in Hugo. Father and mother are both buried at the Oakes family cemetery near Goodwater.

I was born August 21, 1884, at the old Oakes home place. Father and mother lived with Grandfather and Grandmother Oakes at this old home place until after grandfather died; then grandmother broke up housekeeping and went to live with her son, S. L. Oakes at Frogville, where she died fourteen years or more after grandfather did. Mother was born in that old house, so was I and my daughter, now Mrs. Beatrice Mathis, of Hugo, Oklahoma-three generations.

In 1902 Dr. M. L. Carter had just graduated from medical school at Tulane University at New Orleans, La., and had located on "The Big Farm" that was owned by some wealthy Texans.

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There were a good many tenant houses on this farm and several were grouped around the Post Office, which was called Shoals then. Therefore there were so many people there that a resident physician was really needed. That place was afterward and is now called Woodstown, tho' there is no post office there now.

In 1904 we were married. Grandmother had broken up housekeeping, as I said and gone to live with her son, and father had built a nice house on his allotment, one mile south of the old Oakes place, so this old Oakes home was vacant when Dr. Carter and I were married and we moved there. Later we moved to our present home in Hugo, where he practiced his profession and operated a Drug store up to the time of his death, Oct. 23, 1923. He was buried at Mount Olivet cemetery about a half mile southwest of Hugo, Oklahoma. We have four children.

The logs in that old house were immense. They must have been 18 inches or more in width after they were hewn, and were post oak. They were chinked with very white dirt, and that dirt was between those logs when the old house was torn down just a few years ago. There is nothing now at the old house place but underbrush and traces of the old chimneys, and the cemetery.

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That cemetery was once a beautiful place, and was just for the Oakes family and their connections. As far back as I can remember there was nothing at the Goodwater school site except traces of the old walls, sills, chimneys and the cemetery. That was a neighborhood cemetery, yet the missionaries started it. Some of those old graves of missionaries were more than a hundred years old when I was a child. Some of the inscriptions on the tombstones told that. In answer to our inquiries, we were told that those tombstones came from the old homes of the missionaries in Virginia, and were brought part of the way by ox wagons and part by steamer up the river. The missionaries were Presbyterians.

A neighborhood school was established when I was a child about a mile from our home, and it was called Goodwater. We went to school there and as we grew older we went away, we girls to Tuskahoma Female Institute, then to Mary Conner College at Paris, Texas.

I can remember seeing grandmother molding candles of beef tallow, a half dozen at a time. I also remember our first lamp. It was a little brass one, and we were scared to death of it, afraid it would blow up.

Grandmother could speak the Choctaw Indian language,

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but wouldn't let us hear her. When she was compelled to speak it, she'd drive us away, out in the yard or somewhere. They wanted to educate us away from that. Wanted to teach us the white man's way. Grandmother was fair and blue-eyed. She and grandfather both were fair.

My father and mother were deeply religious. We children dreaded to see Sunday come around, because we were not permitted to go out to play. Father was superintendent of the Sunday School, and we had to attend every Sunday. Maybe there would be only our family, and a few little Choctaws who could not talk or understand, but we had to be there and that Sunday School was always held. There was never a fire built for cooking at our house on Sunday. It was all done the day before. We had Dutch ovens, and things were cooked in those on the fireplace, and if the weather was cold they were left close to the fire and kept warm, but that was all. Nor was there any house work of any kind done on Sunday. Mother and father took turns about reading the Bible to us all day long on Sunday. It was a real relief when bedtime came. The Reverend J. P. Gibbons preached to us once each month.

There were eight of us children, two years apart. So when we began getting grown and old enough to begin marrying off, I guess they thought it time to let us have a good time, so they

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began taking us to parties, but we were always in home by 12 o'clock; to our way of thinking, that was just when the party was getting good.

Grandfather Oakes was a carpenter, and even after he went blind he could still feel and have the carpenters make as pretty a coffin as one would want to see. He was blind for fourteen years. He made coffins for the whole community and looms for the Indians for years and years.

They had stretched ropes from trees and posts all over the yard for guides for him, so he could get his exercise alone if necessary. One afternoon I was out in the yard with him and I had some bread and butter. A cat was trying to get my bread and butter. Mother saw him strike at it with his cane. Then she knew he could see, after fourteen years of blindness. When she asked him why he struck at the cat, he said he heard it, but she knew better. He begged her not to tell, especially grandmother, but she did. And he would never tell how long he had been able to see. He never got so he could read, but could see well enough to get around and see objects and persons plainly. The reason he did not want it told was because he was afraid it would worry her. There was an Indian superstition that when an old person's eyesight returned after blindness, then they would soon die. He took pneumonia and died the next November.