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May 26, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Cornelia C. Chandler
Fairland, Okla. (Cherokee Indian)

Born Cherokee Co., North Carolina,
April 9, 1861.

Parents Eliza B. Morris of N. C., mother.
Edward P. Sharp from Va., father.

Mother's early life: She was sent to Franklin to boarding school and they had a nice home with comfortable surroundings.

Grandfather was a white man but grandmother was a fullblood. When the soldiers were hunting the Cherokees and rounding them up to start on the "Trail of Tears," the people were hunted like cattle. They went through their homes, ripping open the feather beds, destroying the beegums, the corn and making the country as desolate as possible. Many tried to hide from them. A man named Scott was the leader of the soldiers.

There was an old man, who was blind, and his wife who were friends of mother and would carry word

to her and others when the soldiers were coming. Once she and two other girls hid for two days under a steep bank near the water and during that time they heard the soldiers going through the timber and bushes above them.

John McKee, one of the soldiers, fell in love with mother and she later married him and after his death she married my father.

My grandfather, who was a white man, obtained permission from the government to bring his family to the Indian Territory at a later date, so it was not till in the year of 1867 that he headed a party of seventy-two persons including my grandparents, my parents and other families and our relations and all started for their new home. There were only three families in the crowd who were not of our family.

The party came to Cleveland, Tennessee, in wagons, then by train part of the way and the balance of the way to Fort Smith by steamboat. Here we were met by relatives and friends and among them was Stand Watie. This was in April. In the party was a Missionary Baptist Minister and the party did not travel

on Sunday but had services wherever they might be and also a service each night. His name was John Shell. He afterwards went blind and is buried at the now Sequoyah School.

The country where we landed was a wilderness; the cane was high as a house, no roads, only trails.

The new home: Our first home was in the Goingsnake District and we lived two years near Evansville, Arkansas. Log houses had to be built, land prepared for farming and in fact everything from the beginning. According to the terms of the removal, grandfather was to be allowed for bringing his party through and they were to have a year's rations, certain farming tools, etc.; but he received nothing. Grandfather went to the Choctaw Nation and bought some milk cows and gave them to each of his children. He gave my mother two. Uncle Morris soon had some sheep and this was a great help as calico was \$2.00 and \$3.00 per yard, so of course we had to spin and weave our own cloth. Flour was \$6.00 per hundred and we only had biscuits on Sunday, sugar only occasionally, browned wheat for coffee and the first year my father

paid twenty-five cents per day for one horse to make his first crop. Some drew rations but we did not and the cows were wild, hard to milk and had to be run into a ^{chute} sheet and tied down at first till they grew gentle. We cooked on the fireplace, though at our old home in North Carolina we had a pot rack made of steel across, and hooks for the pots were in this and in this way the pots could be hung above the fire. We washed with a battling stick, made our own soap and used indigo bluing. Colored our own cloth, using hickory bark for yellow, etc. Cooking pots and ovens were of iron.

The first sewing machine looked like an apple peeler. Before that time all clothing was made by hand and for strength was backstitched. The stitch on the machine looked like a chain on the underside of the cloth.

We had ten yards and made most of the shoes as a good pair of shoes cost from \$3.00 to \$4.00 per pair. Often have I gone barefooted till I was near church and then put on my shoes and, on leaving, after we were out of sight, take off our shoes and carry them to save them. Our money was mostly gold coin.

When there was sickness or death among us, the neighbors stopped everything and took care of them, sitting up nights, even making the coffin, digging the graves and setting the house to rights, etc., in fact we shared our troubles and our joys.

In 1870 Stand Watie came one day to see my mother. Grandmother was at our house and they talked in Cherokee till late in the evening. He was a short, fat man and was riding a pony with a blanket but no saddle. He and Col. Bell were brother-in-laws. Later Col. Bell who was much older than I tried to come to see me. Stand Watie was a brother of grandmother.

Wild game was plentiful. Often we would see deer on the way to and from school. The prairie chickens would light in the yard, and the pigeons were so numerous that sometimes they would darken the sun. Turkeys could be had any time. The deer as venison was dressed and salted and kept for winter. I was very small but I remember the day that the Nationals and Downings met at the George Scott Springs near Stillwell. We all came horseback with grandfather. They talked all day and it was about four o'clock in the afternoon when

they came to a decision and instead of voting they all stood in line and the head of the line, my Uncle Mack Morris, shook hands with the man behind him and this man with the one behind him and so on down the line and this was their way of accepting the agreement.

Most of the older people were Baptists and very attentive at services. I have seen them take a single verse and talk about (discuss) its meaning for a long time. Then too they had the foot-washings.

When Payne, the intruder, was arrested they camped over night with him at our spring on their way to Fort Smith. He was a tall, dark complexioned man with mustache.

Early Schools: My first school was taught by my brother-in-law, Lloyd Welch. The building was about ten feet square and built of logs with no chimney and a dirt floor, with split logs to sit on. We only had school in warm weather. Next, I attended school at Vineyard, Arkansas, and walked two miles. Then the citizens built a building at Muddy Springs. This was three miles. Then grandfather and others built a larger building of logs but this had a chimney and was used both for school and church at Clearwater. Because of

lack of good lights, we seldom had services at night for at that time our only light was candles or pine knots.

Mother died when I was nine years old and father when I was fourteen, so then I was sent to the Cherokee Orphan Asylum at Salina, where I remained two years. Rev. Watt Duncan was in charge. He was more than teacher, he was our daddy. There were 250 children there and among them his three little girls.

Marriage: February 6, 1879, I married John A. Chandler. We were married by the clerk of the Flint District. We lived at my home for a month till Will Littlejohn came to us and asked us to go and keep house for him as his wife had recently died and he had four small children and one of them a baby. We stayed there from April till November, when we moved to our first home about three hundred yards from Gravel Hill and here in December, my first baby was born. We had a double log house with a hall between and a porch. A log crib and cow lot, a fine spring, a good orchard and about seventy-five acres in cultivation. We lived here ten or fifteen years.

My husband was a teacher and in all taught thirty-three years. He taught in Arkansas, and in Oklahoma. ~~Twenty-five years of his teaching was in~~ this state. At one time only six of his pupils spoke English.

My oldest child started to school at five and for the last fifty-two years I have had one or more children in school. I now have two grand-daughters living with me who are going to school. People often remark to me how straight I am and I tell them that is from sitting on school benches without any back. I had nothing to lean on and had to sit up.

From there, we moved to Prairie City, now Ogechee where we lived on my sister's place three years and my husband taught school two years. At that time, Mr. Ritter had a store there and Mr. Audrain was postmaster. Our nearest trading point was Seneca, Missouri, where McGannon had a good general store.

We moved to Fairland in 1917, and my husband died May 8, 1918.

We had a large happy family of the following children:

Felix C., born June 8, 1881; Claud, born December 12, 1879; Myrtie May, born April 25, 1884; John De Witt, born October 27, 1886; Ben Harrison, born December 15, 1888; Fannie Wanira, born July 24, 1891; Homer Edward, born September 20, 1893; Robert Elmer, born February 16, 1896; Otto Cornelius, born August 20, 1898; Laura Corena, born December 31, 1900; and Rebecca C., born April 14, 1904. Of these Felix, Myrtie, John and Fannie have passed on. I had two sisters older than myself now living near me; namely, Mrs. Rebecca Angel of Ogechee who is 80 years old and Mrs. Fannie Chandler of Fairland who is 82 years old. My brother, John C. Sharp has passed on.