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FANNIE ) RENTIE) CHAPMAN, Informant. Creek freedman.

Route 3, Box 2730,

Muskogee, Oklahoma.

April 14-37

-Jas. S. Buchanan

I was born January 1856 in the Creek Nation near Snake creek a few miles southwest of where the town of Leonard is now situated. I was one of eleven children born to Pickett and Mary Rentie who were both born in Alabama in slavery and was owned by a wealthy Creek woman by the name of "ycey Barnwell, and her husband was a white man. I remember my parents telling of the movement of the Creeks from Tuskegee, Alabama to the Indian Territory by steam boat to Ft. Gibson in 1836, and of the sinking of a steam boat that was just ahead of the boat they were on during the trip while on the Mississippi and drowning many Indians and slaves.

Mycey Barnwell settled on the above mentioned location and cultivated much land, also had a home north of where Muskogee now stands, between Muskogee and the Arkansas river, and she was residing at this place when the civil war broke out and she, with my parents and family moved to her farm on Snake creek where we remained until after the war was over. After the war and my parents were free people, my father ~~took~~ up a claim between where Muskogee is now located and the Arkansas river, in the vicinity of what is now known as the Helmer school, and it was on this old place that we children grew to maturity and I was married in 1875 to Jamesiland, a Seminole Indian, who died in 1893. No children were born to that union. Later I was married to Ruff Chapman, a colored non-citizen farmer who died a few years later.

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When the Creek allotments were made I drew my allotment of 160 acres three miles north of Boynton, where I always made my home until 1933 when I was finally swindled out of the property by loan companies, individuals and people in whom I had misplaced confidence. When our children were all at the old home place north of Muskogee, the settlers who were our neighbors were the Bemis family who lived west of us about two miles, uncle Jess Franklin who lived just west of the Bemis place and Simon Brown who was a freedman and his place joined the Bemis place on the east. All the Government-Indian affairs were transacted at that time at the old Creek Agency which was located near Fern Mountain.

The first Indian agent at that place that I can remember was a man by the name of Dunn, who made what was known as the "Dunn roll" of the Creeks and the freedmen, and was a man that was well liked by those with which he dealt. When the consolidated Indian agency was created by the government and the new agency building was built on what is now known as Agency Hill, the old Creek agency was abandoned, and as the Katy railroad had built through the territory, the stores that composed the little town of "Old Agency", as it was known, moved to the railroad, the town of the "Old Agency" passed out of existence, which was the beginning of Muskogee. The principal business houses of "Old Agency" were owned by Major Patterson, J. W. Parkerson and a man by the name of Atkinson, and their movement to the railroad was the beginning of what is now Muskogee.

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After the new Agency building was erected on Agency Hill, there was an Indian agent there by the name of "Roberts" who was well liked by the Indians and the Freedmen. I was employed as house maid for his family for several months at the new Agency building on what is now known as Agency Hill. I worked for Mr. Roberts' family until he retired from that position and moved to Springfield, Illinois.

As to the natural resources of this country, there was all kinds of wild game, such as deer, wild turkey, prairie chicken and other wild game, in abundance. I remember when we resided on the old home place on Snake Creek just after the civil war and we would be coming to the Agency, I have seen great herds of deer grazing in the dells near the timber, and when they would see us they would just scamper into the woods, and as soon as we would pass they would come back on the prairie and continue their grazing. I have seen the prairie chickens, so common that they would come into the yard with our tame chickens, and in the spring time when the turkeys would be "strutting" I have seen the wild turkeys come into our lot with the tame turkeys and my folks would "Flush" them from among the flock and kill them. In those days all the little streams were clear, clean of filth and uncontaminated, and inhabited by every variety of fresh water fish in abundance, which proved no problem for the native to supply himself.