

COLBERT, RACHEL WILLIAMS.

INTERVIEW

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Etta D. Mason,
Investigator,
Jan. 15, 1938.

An Interview With Rachel Colbert,
Choctaw Freedman, Atoka, Oklahoma.

I am a Choctaw freedman. My father's name was Tom Williams, and he belonged to a Mr. Reed when he was freed. My mother was Louisa Kemp and she belonged to Ben Kemp. I was three weeks old when we were freed. My people lived at Colbert Station, Indian Territory. I have seen wild Indians. I saw the Comanches when I was a child.

When I was married to Steward Colbert we moved to Atoka or to what was Atoka at that time. Sam Scratch, a white man, established a planing mill and a general merchandise business a mile east of Atoka. There was a fine spring of water at that place and Sam Scratch built houses there for his workers to live in. The place is the highest point around Atoka, that is the way it came to be called Scratch Hill. Scratch did not live there himself. He maintained a fine home in Atoka. He had his own sawmill farther in the pine country but the planing was done at his mill on Scratch Hill.

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When Highway 19 was built a roadway was blasted through this hill and now the highway is built through it. It is a very beautiful spot.

There are several springs on and at the base of the hill and a short ways from the road is an old abandoned gold mine. Three quarters of a mile south of the hills is a spring. General Steel was camped at this spring. It is still in use. People for miles around haul water from it. The water is mineral.