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Interview with Mrs. Joe Dawson,  
Nannie Lee Burns, Interviewer  
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#### PIONEER DAYS NEAR AFTON.

My father was G. H. Jackson, a white man, born and reared in Georgia.

My mother, Ellen Jackson, a Cherokee was born near Berryville, Arkansas. She had two sisters and three brothers. My maternal grandparents moved to Texas where my father and mother were married near Waco in the late fifties.

I was born December 11, 1863.

#### CIVIL WAR DAYS.

My parents lived in the state of Texas during the War, and my father served the full four years as a confederate soldier. He was in the battle of Pea Ridge.

Mother remained at home and one incident which I have heard her describe stands out in my memory. One day she had gone to the woodpile for wood and had stooped over to pick the wood up. When she looked up, several Indians in red blankets stood before her, she was so scared that she could not speak, but when they saw that they had frightened her so, they went away without saying anything.

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Sometimes they would surround the house, but she said that they never harmed her.

My husband was also born and reared near Berryville, Arkansas. As their house was burned twice during the war, all their family records were lost and he did not even know when he was born, although he said last year before he died that he was eighty-four.

#### REMOVAL TO INDIAN TERRITORY.

In the latter part of 1832 my father came here and looked at this <sup>country</sup> and bought a small place from Mrs. Nan Knight, one mile south and just a little east of where Afton is now. The only improvement on it was an old two-room house made of native lumber, but the rooms were large. It had no barns or other buildings.

Our family came with father on the train from Osage, Texas, and reached Afton March 12, 1833. There was no town here then, only <sup>a</sup> section house and box-car which was used as a flag stop.

I did not want to come, and thought at first that I would not. After I did come I never liked it, neither the climate nor the country.

There were four boys and two girls of us. In Texas we had gone to school, church and Sunday School and to parties, and had nice homes to live in. Here we had

neither church nor Sunday School.

#### LIFE IN INDIAN TERRITORY

Father purchased a team and two cows when we came. That year he built a barn and a small poultry house. He had to break sod for the crop that year, and it was so late in the season that the crop was not very good, we had just corn and truck patches.

He fenced his field for the cattle that were run on the prairie. That fall he put in a wheat crop and the next year had both corn and wheat.

That first summer, my sister Flora, with the aid of Mr. Henry Livingston and Old Barry Johnson as superintendent organized a Sunday School. They held their services out of doors under a big tree that summer. Later when it grew cool Mr. Johnson gave them the use of a little log room on his place where the Sunday School was moved. That Christmas we had a Christmas tree there. We girls worked and made most of the things and trimmings for the tree. Many of those who came had never seen one, and thought it funny.

Mr. G. W. Beck who lived not far away felt sorry for us and would give a party once in a while.

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rather made us flower beds and we planted the seeds that we had brought and whatever we could get, such as zinnias, poppies and marigolds.

Then too, we would ride to Horse Creek in the fall and gather grapes, nuts etc.

That winter we had spellings at our little loghouse and then we started a Literary. We tried to be busy, and as happy as possible, but we had little to read, as we had to go to Vinita for our mail and took all day. We had only the two horses and when they were busy, father would not take them from the field, so we didn't get mail each week.

A subscription school, called The Beck School a mile and a half south, was the only one in this part of the country. It lasted only through the winter months, and here my youngest brother started to school again.

#### MARRIAGE.

In May 1885, I married Joe Dawson, a Cherokee cowboy. He had gone with his brothers to Texas, attracted there by the free range and the opportunity for cattle raising. He had been working with his brother Buck for

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some years in the cattle business and came to this country to look after cattle for his brother-in-law.

We went to housekeeping three miles of where Afton is now, in a double log house with an entry between the rooms. I was lonesome and afraid, and would bar the doors when I was alone. My husband tried to farm the first year and broke out about fifteen acres, and we had a little garden. He bought himself a team of mules. He did not make much of a success at farming and so turned again to the cattle business which he liked. He continued to give most of his time to that until our two oldest boys were old enough to farm. Then he began to farm on a large scale.

After some years of farming, we left the farm and moved to Afton. This was forty-five years ago. Mr. Dawson went into business and had a grocery store and ran a wagon yard.

We lived here for some years and sent the children to school; then my husband sold out, and we moved back to the farm, this time staying till the children were married. Left alone, we again rented the farm, twenty-two years ago and moved back to

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Afton where we have stayed since as my husband was growing too old to work as before. He died at our home last winter, December 8, 1936.

#### CONCLUSION.

Afton has always been called a "White Man's Town". We have not had many Cherokees around here and those who were here have lived south and east near Horse Creek.

I saw my first Indians when we were on our way to this country while I was looking out of the train window at Muskogee.

Few Indians lived in this prairie country until after the allotment of lands.