

## INDEX CARDS

Intertribal Marriages  
Civil War Refugees--Southern  
Factions--Cherokee  
Elections--Cherokee  
Farming--Cherokee Nation  
Wealthy Indians--Cherokee  
Schools--Creek Nation  
Towns--Creek  
Robertson, Alice  
Freedmen--Creek  
Porter, Pleasant

LIFE AND EXPERIENCE OF A PIONEER  
INDIAN WOMAN

584

Interview given by Mrs. Ruth Myers  
Rulison, 803 South 14th, Muskogee,  
to Miss Robinson, Field Worker,  
Indian-Pioneer History.

My parents were John Myers and Sarah Ann Butler Myers. They were born in the Indian Territory during the years between 1845 and 1850, (exact date not known). Their parents having immigrated west with the Indians in 1838. My father was of Cherokee blood and my mother belonged to the Creek Tribe. They had two daughters, myself and my sister. My father enlisted in the Confederate Army and served through the duration of the war. My mother's family refuged to Texas at the beginning of the war as did many of the Indians. They were married in 1864 and I was born in '65 near the present site of Durant in the Chickasaw Nation. They lived there for a time before returning home. In 1867 they came to the Cherokee Nation and established their home near Claremore near Dog Creek. They lived in the community with the Rogers and Scrimshaw families, who were their nearest neighbors and intimate friends. When I became of school age, I started to school at the Dog Creek School House, some distance from where we lived. As I was too small to go alone, my mother placed me in the home of Mrs. Van Chambers where I stayed through the week. Those were troublous times, politically; and as my father was interested in political affairs, my mother suffered no little uneasiness. The Dog Creek Court House was not far from our home and things became lively during political campaigns. My father was an energetic business man and accumulated quite a lot of property. As he had good teams and wagons as a side-line, he engaged in trading. He bought staple groceries at Chetopa, Kansas and hauled them home and sold them in the community in which he lived, making a fair profit. He became ill with Tuberculosis. Acting upon the advice of his doctor, he went to

Galveston, Texas, taking his nephew with him. He died in 1873 and was buried there. The exact location was not known by his family as the boy did not return to the Indian Territory. After his death my mother felt that she did not belong in the Cherokee Nation and wanted to return to her own people in the Creek Nation and live among them. We located twenty miles north of the present site of Coweta.

My mother had attended school at Tulahassee Mission before the Civil War. The people in charge of the mission schools in those days never lost track of their former pupils. As the Creeks lived in closely settled villages or communities which were designated as towns, they had no trouble in locating my mother. They wanted her to place us in the Mission and as she had been a former pupil of the school, she readily responded; and my sister and I went there to school. Reverend Robertson, father of Miss Alice Robertson, was in charge of the school at that time. I well remember Miss Alice coming home from the east after ~~the~~ her graduation and what a fine lady I thought she was and how I admired her clothes. My sister and I remained there until the school buildings burned. Cheaper buildings were erected and the Mission was converted into a school for Negroes. <sup>Wialaka</sup> ~~Will Locker~~ Mission was built at that time to replace Tulahassee Mission as a school for Indian girls. I was fifteen years old at the time and our mother had died. We went to stay in the home of a cousin, our nearest relative. He was willing that my younger sister should go to school but said that I was quite old enough to quit school. I was greatly grieved over the situation but had determined in my mind to continue school if it was possible. Happily the situation was solved by a relative, Mrs. Childers, living some 20 miles distance, coming to visit us. On hearing my story, she proposed taking me home with her for the summer and told me that she would pay me for services

that I might be able to render. We made plans for the next school year and she helped me with my clothes. When my cousin came for me to go home, I proudly announced that I was all ready for school. When we went away to school we stayed the entire nine months without a visit home as roads were poor and travel was slow. Our families did not come to see us during the year except in cases of sickness. During the school year provisions had been made whereby students who had no parents would be taken care of during the vacation. Again when my cousin came for us we told him we were not going home and as he became very insistent upon our going and as we were afraid that he would force us to go, we hid in a store-room in the attic until he left in disgust. As we did not know exactly how to manipulate the lock, we locked ourselves in and thought we were there for keeps. But the kind-hearted matron, Mrs. Maggie Starnes, came to our rescue. Reverend Whitehead was in charge of the school. We stayed there two years and this school was also burned. It was located near the home of Chief Pleasant Porter. The post office at that place now is Leonard. In 1885 we came to Muskogee and attended Harrell Institute and boarded in the school. Reverend and Mrs. T. F. Brewer was in charge and what grand people they were. Mrs. M. E. Locke, a sister of Mr. Brewer, was my friend and comforter in times of discouragement and difficulties. The Presbyterian Mission, school for girls had been opened at that time in Muskogee, and having been reared in the Presbyterian faith, we were persuaded by our friends to attend their church-school. I was there for three years when I married Mr. Edgar R. Rulison. My sister married Mr. John Jourdan and lived only a few years. She left a little boy whom I reared. I am the mother of two sons, both living. Irving, the older one, lives in New York City, the younger one makes his home in Muskogee. We have made our home continuously in Muskogee for 51 years.