

[1] Nero community. All about the river in the Colton section. Our house - 2 parts with a porch built on each area between. On one side there were two rooms. 3 brothers lived in the side. There was a room where there was an old foot treading organ, a tall dresser-like shelf and closet at the bottom part where my mother kept dishes for

[2?] the house. [Our?] family left [sp?] with her. That [was] a special place. Our play room, was with the boys room. On the other side, parents' room, kitchen, girls room. We ate in the kitchen. There were 7 children, mom, and dad eating on the table. It was at this house I met my oldest sister and brother

[3?] who were living away from our home, where they were working and going to school.

They came home [to] visit one Thanksgiving and at that time around age 4 years old came to know my brother Roosevelt and my sister Rebecca. My sister [was] a[n] away teacher. they took me all around the house all day. They didn't stay, they left that same day and went back with the people. I had two (2) other sisters older than I, but always wanted to be with Rebecca. She came back to visit [cont. from 3] but never to to live with us.

[4] The community I remember most was Huttonville

Our family was sharecroppers which we would often be moving to another place later depending on circumstances relating to production of the fields. So it happened in 1922-24, crops were not producing. My parents also wanted better schools for us. I also heard that further west, Indian families were moving off their land.

[5] and offering for new settler opening. My family joined the move and in 1925 offers came our way. New government laws and even the President of the United States had some plans that opened up the chance to go westward into Indian Territory where churches and schools were more available. With the opportunity [May Pare? sp?] move into McIntosh County to an open community called Huttonville. The year 1925 we joined many families to claim small individual farms.

[6] They were disappointed in some things but they decided to work the best that they could. There was not much land, but my father cleared land and during off seasons, dad took the older children back to the cotton gone to work for several years and all of us could go to school during regular school terms. Finally dad got a job and all of us went to school. Our first school was in a small building 1 1/2 miles

[7] from home. It was 2 years before I could join them in school. I learned as much before going to school. I became a real snooper. I listened to my sister and brother who studied at home. I would listen [to] mom read and sometimes I would [read] her Bible for a few minutes and look for the place in the Bible she had read out aloud to us. We had songbooks they sang from

[8] I started to school at age 7 yrs. I had a handmade book bag that whenever I walked it bumped my heels. My lunch was mostly a biscuit with eggs and jelly. Same days we had cookies. Sometimes home cured ham. Sometimes fruit from homegrown trees.

[9] We had a smoke house where you could almost always have homemade link sausages. There were mid-sized barrels of sorghum molasses (syrup) made on the farm, dried fruits, canned vegetables and fruit, pecans, black walnuts. In the animal area there was a farm and shed where peanuts, corn, and pumpkins were housed on bales of hay.

[10] My mother was a kind of resource leader. She was a 4-H Club leader somewhat, always called on by the school leaders as well as at the church. She raised [Mary foulds gyenia -sp?] geese, and chickens by the hundred. She was once honored with a week at Langston University along with some other mothers, there they were encouraged to preserve and prepare for the home. To beautify yards, etc. So after school we developed many ideas. We enhanced Home-Ec skills again. I say being a sharecropper's daughter

[11] We experienced different home-style living. We moved to one location where rain swelled the creek so we had to use a boat to cross the stream and walk one half mile to get to school. The county gave a bus and we were riding each way for nearly one hour. Finally one of the elementary teachers adopted a very young native Indian child and she wanted someone to be a companion to her so she asked my mother for me to be the one. My mom agreed for me to... live with Dr. and Mrs. Cooper to be the companion for

[12] the little girl, Lillian, soon became a senior and then graduation. Upon graduation my mother's sister who lived in Tulsa came and carried me to stay with her. The second Sunday I went to church with my aunt one of her friends came and offered me a baby-sitting job for her daughter. The first week of baby sitting I found out my job was one block from

[13] Booker T. Washington high school where classes for high school graduates to take classes for 1 year credits for college and the hours of 6:30-8. Just what I could do. I enrolled and finished the course. By the end of the year my parents wanted me back home. I returned to Eufala where dad had moved to a new location. I took a job.

[5] \$10.00 was for one doctor who heard me sing during my high school years when our school invited the board to dinner. My former principal's wife talked with my mother

[14] she found out our family could not afford the expense of Langston, she said her sister and mother owned a rooming house on the grounds close up to Langston where students live. She made the connect[ion] and an opening for me. I entered Langston University and remained for 3 years. Received [a] B.S. [in] Elementary Education. 10 months earlier than eligibility for regular hiring. Took three months to visit Kansas where I thought I might re-enter school, but other plans

[15] intervened and finally I got married. From Kansas I returned with one addition to my family and eligible to teach and assignment to teach. First assignment was a small community — Whites Chapel — assigned to another small, all partially Indian mixed which sent me a "dancing with wolves." I won't forget it was near a mountainside. The people were far apart. None spoke clearly. My oldest sister had married Daniel Anderson who was most part Indian and lived [in] this community and some of its people. Daniel carried me out to see the school which was in poor condition, no place to stay but in a family

[16] home. I saw the dogs. I refused to stay. We went to the school and saw the one-time teacher quarters had been burned down. I refused to stay the second time. The third time I decided to spend that night in the school. My experience was in the night I heard the howling of wolves.

[17] I peeped through the window crack to see about 6 grey wolves going down the road past the school. Tomorrow was Friday. Dan would come and take me to the superintendent's office and Dan worked out a plan. The Indian church was a little less than a block from the school. Many of the families own[ed] a hut that encircled the church where they all came on Friday and stayed through Sunday. There was a couple that stayed all [the] time. Dan arranged for me to occupy a hut

[18] where no one would come now. This family hut was about 10 steps apart, so he moved me. That weekend I took 2 young nephews back with me. One nephew from 2 sisters. My student population $9+2=11$. That year I prepared them to participate in 4-H club - demonstration. We received [a] blue ribbon. The girl demonstrating turned the handle of the egg beater upside down. Teachers who had studied under [???] me and at the ending of the year, my former high school principal, Mr. L.W. Presley, requested me to come to Eufaula to teach 2nd grade until after World War 2.

[19] When my husband came home from World War II, his desire was to attend pre-dentist[ry] at Howard University. We applied, he was accepted. He entered Howard and attended while [I] remained employed in Oklahoma until we decided different. So it became my move. There were no jobs to advance and had acquired a job that would help us attain a home and we had one so who should have access to good schools. Our final move to Washington, DC, 1951.

Family

Maternal: Grandad — self-styled preacher; Grand[mother] — short-lived from slavery
[more, not clear]

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School Days - School was, and has always been my joy. I was regularly a company keeper to much older people. In each community of the five locations where our family lived, there were widow women who were real friends to the family. They often had a need for me to help them or just be at their house. I can remember at least four of them. There were in one instance, where two sisters lived together and their brother, a real old man lived with them and my mother visited them with me and never was left with them and helped to do something. Finally to one of them who was not so old moved to another town with a white woman as her helper. I got a chance to go and see where she lived and what kind of work Miss Lula Lewis did. By then our oldest

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Hello! It's me. Remember about a year ago I was given an instrument to record some of my growing up experiences and some life accomplishments - High school, college, and beyond. I tell you about walk through walk through unless I include a few earlier years, so it's a bit controlling to avoid some things that may not be interesting to you. I began talking on the recorder. I put the recorder aside for sometime, I needed to avoid details.

Now I call my story, "Life of a sharecropper's daughter." I am sure you have some knowledge of what a sharecropper means. Families living and working on land owned by [an] owner of many acres or parcels of farmland. Who provided the land to produce many facets of sources of income to the providers and whenever the production failed the working family had to move on. As a result of this we experienced having to move 5 times in my memory.

Being the ninth child of the family I was blessed in some ways and no so blessed otherwise. I saw a lot. Heard much. Received much training at home, at school, and at church. I started to school at age 7 with 3 brothers and 2 sisters, all older. My first teacher was part Indian, who had been taught in the Indian Training Mission of Missouri, who came to our house many times. MRs Adah McGhee. She started me in the corner of her room at school with a chart of ABC. I finished the chart real fast and did so with 1st and 2nd grade. I memorized much of my work. We walked 1 mile and a quarter to and from school. I studied on my way home most days.

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I. "Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever!"

We learned this verse as we were growing up in Sunday School classes in the [unknown] classes all through our church. It is so good and appropriate in our lives of the present to say He is good. We praise Him because we are blessed to live many generations. There are many Bible verses we recall in living out our present experience. I've been a long time responding to the request [for the]

II. rest of my story and I will talk about myself, the sharecroppers' daughter! My school days and my life from high school and further [unknown] communities — crossing the water stream to school from one of the[m] using the boat. First the teacher adopted the little native Indian girl. My family was deep in Christianity. First I thought what can I say that would claim the attention of people so young, whose lives are so far different from that of almost 8 decades past. That actually is of interest. Our families were much larger. Our homes were organized very differently. Our schools were crowded in most cases, unequipped. Our teachers lived under terrible conditions in hardly like those who were in even the 7, 8 decades. So I began with lifestyles that found to be a family history too full of irrelevant information, so I decided to talk about how I

III. served as a companion until graduation to a real native Indian child. My going to Tulsa: How I got to be baby sitter, how I got to be a student. Foster parents Dr. and Mrs. Cooper (a popular sorority member). I helped her [Indian child] learn as she needed. When I finished Eufaula high school, my aunt who lived in Tulsa came and carried me to Tulsa to work with her. My coming back to Eufaula. My visiting — brother. Why. My younger brother taken to shipyards — Cal. In the interim: meeting Quinton. He enrolls in Langston my junior/sophomore year. The war, he gets drafted. I graduate. He visits. I go to Kansas. The marriage: We go to Enid, then to Kansas City where Dollie was in school.

Handwritten recollections of Willie Mae Osborn
(undated, some numbered pages, written on snowman notepad and other scrap paper)
Rough transcript compiled 12-15 April 2024

He gets assigned to move. I decided to stay in K.C. Oscar born. Dad calls about teaching job.

IV. Oscar and I go back to Eufaula where I got employed at Whites Chapel, Henrietta near Dan/Rebecca. Prof. Pressly — Booker T. Washington, Eufaula. Until that ended and we both were in Eufaula. He [Quinton] had met several guys from D.C. He planned to go to Howard University. I wrote the application. Quinton got accepted. He came to Howard U. in September, I came to visit [in] May. I taught until the next came. I worked and ending that semester, 1951. I joined the church.

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