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McMINN, M. P.

INTERVIEW

7568

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INTERVIEW
BIOGRAPHY FORM

Form A-(S-149)

7568233

McMINN, MRS. M.P.

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Lula Austin

This report made on (date) September 18 1937

1. Name Mrs. M. P. McMinn

2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 604 N. 3rd.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4.

McMINN, M. P. (MRS.) INTERVIEW

7568

Lula Austin,
Interviewer,
September 16, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. M. P. McMinn,
Durant, Oklahoma.

Milton P. McMinn, my husband, served in the Civil War, enlisting at the age of sixteen years. The last two years of the War he spent quite a bit of time at Fort Washita. He was never in real service, was sick in the hospital at Fort Washita six weeks with fever. The hospital was located where the old cemetery is now. Colonel Belknap was stationed there at that time. One day after he was able to sit up, he was sitting on the porch when he saw a man coming, leading a horse; how happy he was when he recognized the man as his father. He went home with him and remained a month. His oldest brother was killed in the war.

The soldiers' rations were poor; they did not receive the attention that the boys in the last war did. The only gift from the government my husband received during the war was what was called a round about jacket, that was all the government ever gave him. If he needed shoes, unless his people sent them, he had to wear old

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ones if they happened to be worn out. Many nights he stood on guard all night in the rain.

The soldiers were marched to Richmond, Texas, and disbanded there; it was far away from most of the boys' home. We never knew why they took them there to disband. On the way to Richmond they had little food for a week. They passed a wild berry patch and had a feast on them. My husband said his feet were so blistered it was a month before he could wear shoes. The night after he arrived home he told his mother she could put him anywhere to sleep, just so he was alone. He said he had slept with all kind of people and had a horror of sleeping with anyone.

Charlie Colbert lives where the officers' quarters were. Part of the cabin was there during the Civil War. He said he never could see why so much money was spent at Fort Washita on buildings as they were used very little.

I often went with my husband to Fort Washita. He would talk to me about the days he spent there as a soldier and point out different places of interest.

MCMINN, M. P. (MRS.) INTERVIEW

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In the fall of 1898, there was a piece in the Dallas News about the following ghost story which I heard Mrs. Peveto relate. My husband and I went to the Fort the Sunday after reading an account of the story in the paper. When we arrived there we went to the home of Mrs. Peveto, who lived in one of the old buildings that had a large fireplace. We were met at the door by a boy about nine years old who told us his mother was not at home, but who excitedly said, "The ghost came." We waited until his mother came home and this is what we heard from her:

"It was after supper and I was in the kitchen washing the dishes. I heard what I had heard many times before, a stone roll down on the roof stopping in the eaves. It was much louder that night. I paused from my dishwashing and said, 'In the name of God, what was that?' A silvery-white headless figure appeared in the doorway, placed a bony hand on the sill and said, 'Follow me and I will reward you'. I screamed and said, 'I can't, I can't,' and fainted. My husband who was in the adjoining room rushed in and found me on the floor." She also told us that she had seen this headless woman put beautiful baby clothes on the line.

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Mrs. Peveto moved away from Fort Washita and at one time lived in Durant.

Allen Toombs, who lives in the home of Mrs. McMinn, has a quilt (Tulip design) that was pieced by his mother's great aunt who came from Mississippi with the Indians. The quilt has her name, Ellen Murphy, and date when quilted embroidered on the quilt. It was made ninety-three years ago, and is in perfect condition.

RICHARD (DICK) MORGAN.
Durant, Okla.
(An intermarried Choctaw Citizen)
An Interview.

Mrs. Lula Austin---Research Worker.
Indian-Pioneer History, 3-149
April 14, 1937.

Date of Birth--April 25, 1854.

Place of Birth---Virginia

Father---W. E. Morgan

Place of Birth---Virginia

Mother--Sallie Morgan

Place of Birth--Virginia

INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD (DICK) MORGAN

DURANT, OKLAHOMA.

INTERMARRIED CHOCTAW CITIZEN.

I left Virginia when a boy and came west, finally locating in Wolf City, Texas where I remained until 1893. During my stay there Mr. George, for whom I worked, and who had become attached to me, suggested that I join him in a cattle feed adventure. We entered this business, which proved profitable to me, giving me a start in the business which was to be afterwards the business I would follow throughout my later years.

In the month of March, 1893, with the profits I had made, a team and covered wagon, I moved north to Indian Territory, finally landing in the town of Durant, a small place on the Katy railroad, but in the heart of the finest grazing country I had ever seen, with good pens and yards for shipping cattle.

Durant at this time had no more than three hundred people. The town consisted of four stores- Drug store, Barber, two Grocery stores. Water was secured by wells. The principal industry was Cotton, Corn and cattle.

Enough was seen to assure me that I had found the place to locate, which I did.

I had enough money to start buying cattle, and it was during one of my cattle buying trips that I met my future wife who was Loerna Nail, a Choctaw, daughter of

Catherine Harkins and Edward Neil. I was married under the Choctaw law, I was required to have ten signers before I could obtain a license and the fee was \$100.00--that gave me all the rights and privileges of a fullblood Indian.

As the town grew, I was the one to help build the first church in Durant, which was the Methodist. Later the building was sold. We built the second one, which afterward burned. R. L. Williams came and asked me for a donation to build another one. I wrote him a check for \$100.00. I subscribed to build the first college in Durant, for girls. Helped to establish First National Bank, which was first bank under charter. I was Vice*President for twenty-six years.

The first bank was operated by Jones and Ledbetter without a charter. Capital was \$5000.00. I borrowed all the money and bought cattle. I had gone to Wolf City on business and on arriving there had word to return to Durant immediately as the depositors had made a run on the bank. The bankers had locked the doors and were hiding, as the depositors threatened to kill them if the money was not returned. I went to the depositors and told them I had borrowed the money and would give them my note for the amount. That satisfied them. I

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shipped the cattle and cleared \$3000.00, paid the bank and the depositors were paid, The bank closed. This ended the first bank in Durant.

I help to organize the Democratic party before statehood. I was one of the first Aldermen of Durant; was elected April 9, 1900.

I was connected with the Wilson-Jones faction. The Wilson-Jones and Locke factions went to war over the election. Both had an army and several men were killed. The fighting was in the vicinity of Antlers and around the capital at Talihina. Jones won. Then came another faction over election. Green McCurtain and Tom Hunter. The Hunter faction held an election and took the ballot boxes to Talihina and the McCurtain faction guarded the capital. Calling on the United States for troops, a company of Negro soldiers were sent and took charge of ballot boxes and McCurtain won 3 to 1 and was elected Chief. My wife's grandfather, Robert Nail, was chairman of Rabbit Creek Colony and an interpreter for the Indians.

It was the custom for the Indians to hold cattle for the white men, Will Durant (Present Chief of Choctaws) held cattle for the Doogans. Their brand was

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the bar X 4.

A white man was charged \$500. a year, permit to live in the Territory. They would put in claims for the Indians and live there for the improvements. The Indians would fence as much as 640 acres, no one could locate within a $\frac{1}{4}$ a mile of each other.

Before statehood Indians were all self-sustaining, had plenty stock, chickens and nice gardens. There were no beggers. We had good schools. Never had people lived in such a cuntry as we had then.

We had many outlaws here, one bunch composed of Lon Gardner, Tandy Folsom, Ed Bohanan, and Dave Bohanan, who were all nearly full-blood Indians. Many times I have seen them all drinking and riding their horses in the store and shooting, not caring whom they killed.

The United States made a treaty of peace with Tandy Folsom, which is a matter of record in the Fort Smith Courts, wiped out everything against him and made him an officer of the United States.

Alec Robinson, another outlaw, stole a poor Dutchman's oxen at night while he was in camp and hid them. I gave Ed. Bohanan \$5.00 to go to Muskogee to get a warrant to arrest him. He went to arrest Alec and was

shot in the back by Alec, who was hidden in a dug-out. They never proved Alec shot him.

The Choctaws had no jails. They punished you by whipping you at the whipping post and, if you committed a third offense, shot you. I recall a man who was convicted of murder and sentenced to die. He was turned loose and told when to come back to be shot. Some of the men tried to get him to ride horseback into Texas and escape. "No", he said, "me come back". He did. They had him sit under a tree and put a cross over his heart and a Mr. Posey shot him.

I was a close friend of Wilson N. Jones, Choctaw full-blood, who was called Chief among his people. He was the biggest cattle man in the country. I bought cattle from him for ten years and unless you shipped them out he wouldn't sell to you, and one day I was grazing cattle around old Ft. Washita and often heard the story about the Fort being haunted. It was said that a man and woman were hanged there for being traitors. Each night they were seen riding around and around the house. But in all my nights spent there, I was not fortunate enough to see them. There was an
There was an old Irishman who volunteered to spend the

night there and watch for the riders. While sitting before the fire, a voice apparently coming from a cat that was lying on the hearth said, "Nobody here but you and me, Pat, is there?" The Irishman said, "What?" and the voice spoke again and Pat said, "and by _____ no one will be here but you in a minute."

When the Indians began to register at the County Court House at Caddo for their allotments, the following were in charge of the register. McKee Robinson, Joe Bryant, Jude Hampton, Jude Byington and Turner Turnbull, all Choctaws. The day I registered the men who had charge of the register were all drinking a little and feeling good. As I approached one of them said, "Here comes Jack Morgan, let him register, but don't let Mr. Woodward". Woodward was with me and intermarried like myself, and they wouldn't let him register, but later he went back and registered.

Negro slaves of Choctaws received forty acres. The government paid the Choctaws for land given the negro.

My wife was a very attractive Indian and had many admirers when a young girl.

In my courting days I had two good friends whose houses I would pass on my way to my girl's--a Mrs. Crowder and Mrs. Case. They would see children carrying notes to my girl from her other beaux and would persuade them to sell them for ten cents. They would destroy them and tell me about them.

On my first visit with my wife to my old home in Carsville, Virginia, in 1898, nearly every one in town met the train, even an old negro slave who had belonged to the family. They thought I was bringing back an Indian wearing a blanket and feathers. They were much surprised to see a beautiful, well-educated woman.

My wife died May 7, 1920, leaving six children, and myself to mourn the loss of a sweet christian wife and mother.

My father and mother, W. E. Morgan and Sallie Morgan, are both dead. I have three sisters and two brothers living.

EXPERIENCES IN CATTLE BUSINESS

Atwood Risner bought 120 head of horses from Abner Willis, who was administrator for Mrs. Durant. He gave \$10.00 a head. He shipped 1 car, along with some cattle I was shipping to Pumroy and Handley, St. Louis, Mo. Two weeks later we went up there and the market had been flooded with mules, fillies, mares, and colts. We asked Mr. Handley, (who was a Dutchman,) what the horses brought. He took us to his

books and said "well, the freight was \$17.00, feed so much, care so much"; so I just asked him what the theatre tickets and breast car fare was, as he had everything but that charged against them. Mr. Risner lost heavily on his horses. When we returned home he sold those he didn't ship to me. I made money on them, sold 1 span for \$250.00.

I later went broke; owed the Sherman bank \$25,000. I went to Jim Nail, who was President of the bank, and offered to turn what cattle I had over, he said "no".

Mr. M. H. Turner, of Wolf City, Texas, heard of my hard luck and sent for me. Said he had \$65,000 he would let me have to buy cattle if I would pay him 6% on money and half the profit, I agreed and in two weeks I was back for more money. He let me have \$25,000 more. I bought more cattle and after I had fed them 60 days I sold them to Mr. Dumas, doubling my money.

In 1906 during a money panic I bought 600 steers, near where Boswell is now, and gave my due bill to Willie W. Wilson, payable on demand. Then I shipped the cattle to Durant and couldn't get the money to pay freight. I stood the Frisco R. R. off for 30 days.

On one trip to the market at St. Louis with 250 steers during a Pullman strike, we shipped, at our own risk, and were unloaded at Parsons Kansas, for three days. When we finally arrived in St. Louis, the pens were empty and the packing houses were clamoring for cattle. I sold to the St. Louis Packing Company for \$70.00 and I had only paid \$22.00. around.

Dixon Durant had his claim where Durant is located. He sold lots for homes, but when allotments came up, the townsites were all reserved by the government and you had to pay the approved price. All who had purchased from Dixon Durant had the privilege to buy the lot they occupied.

Name: _____

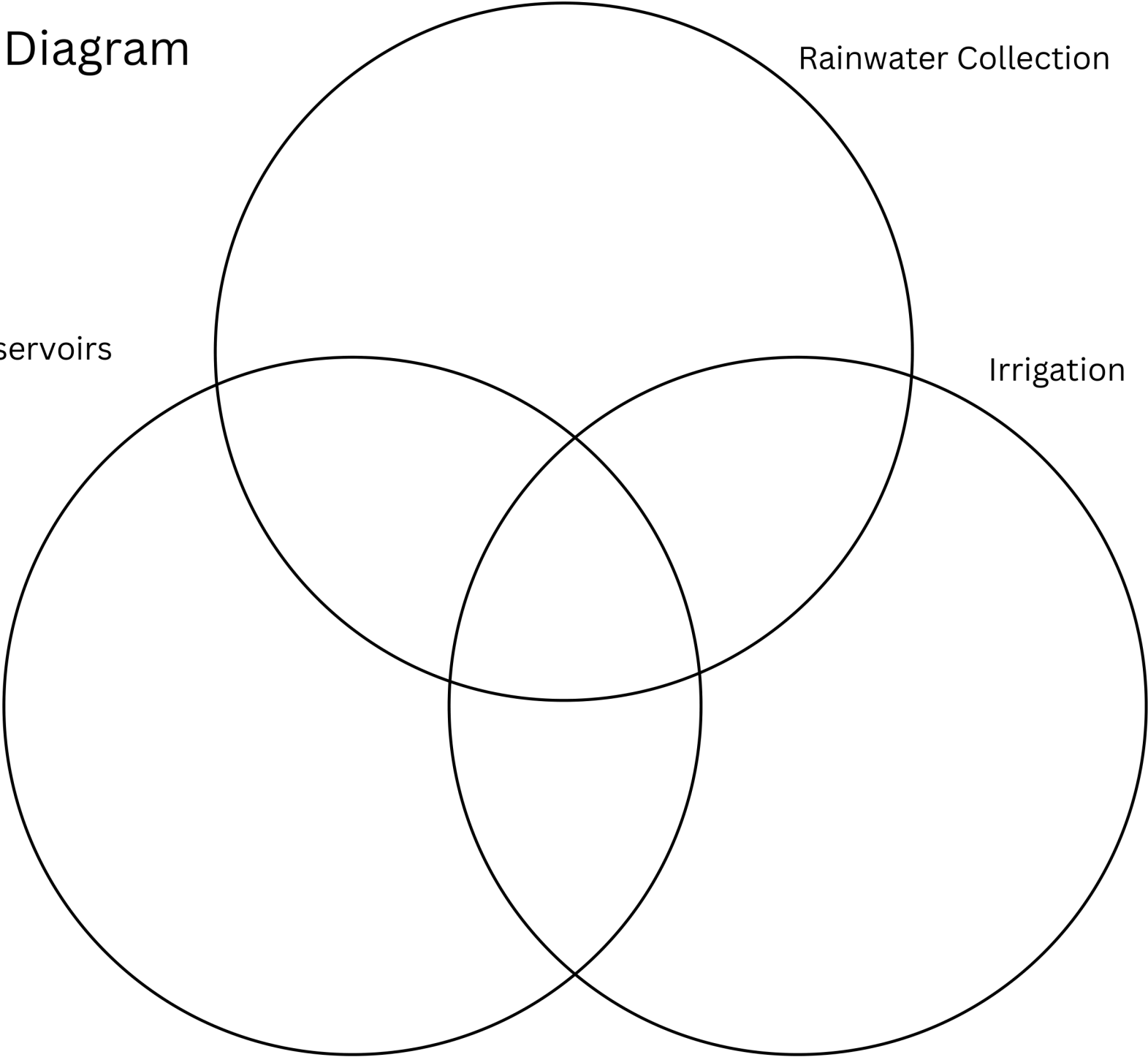
Date: _____

Venn Diagram

Reservoirs

Rainwater Collection

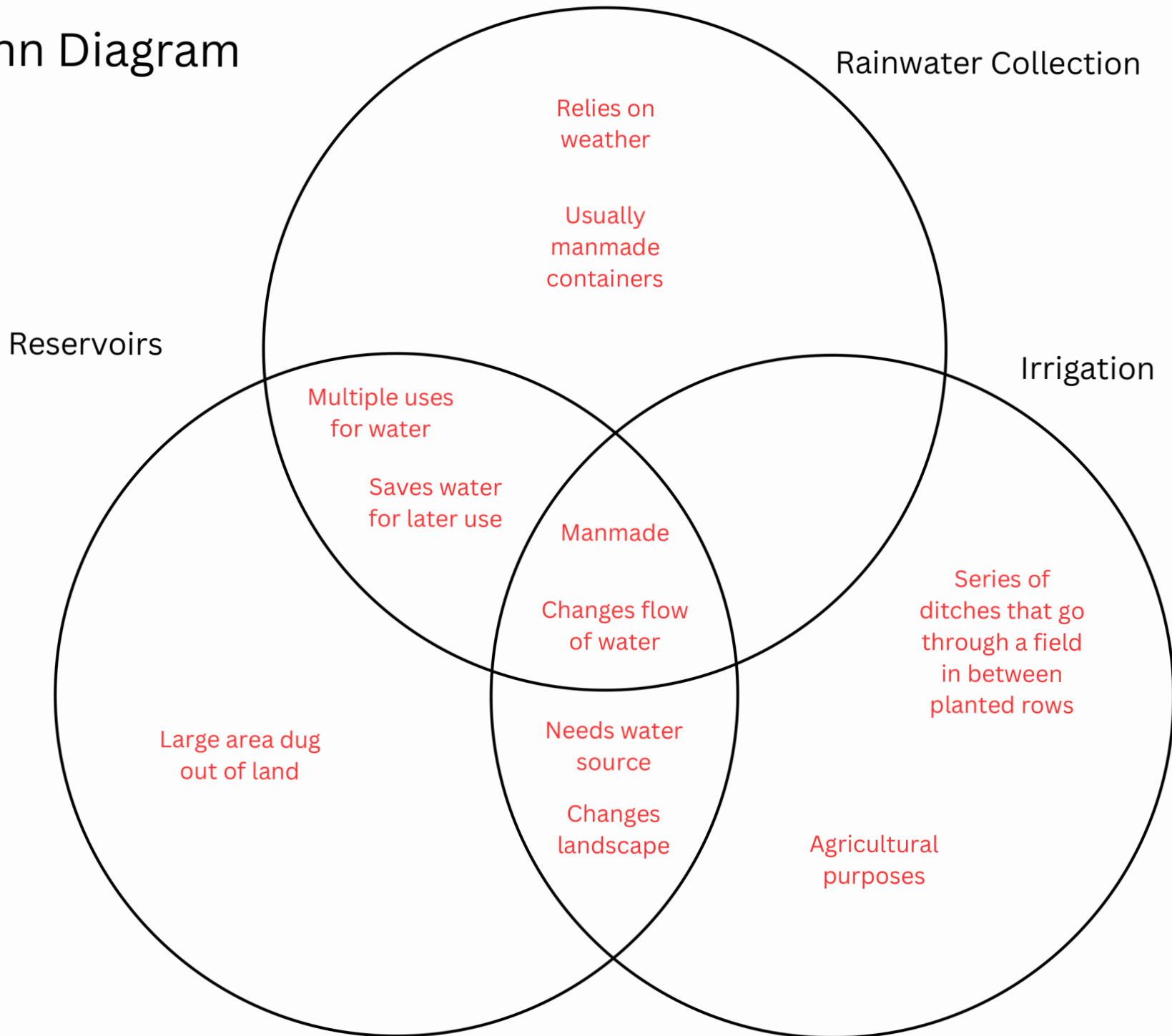
Irrigation



Name: _____

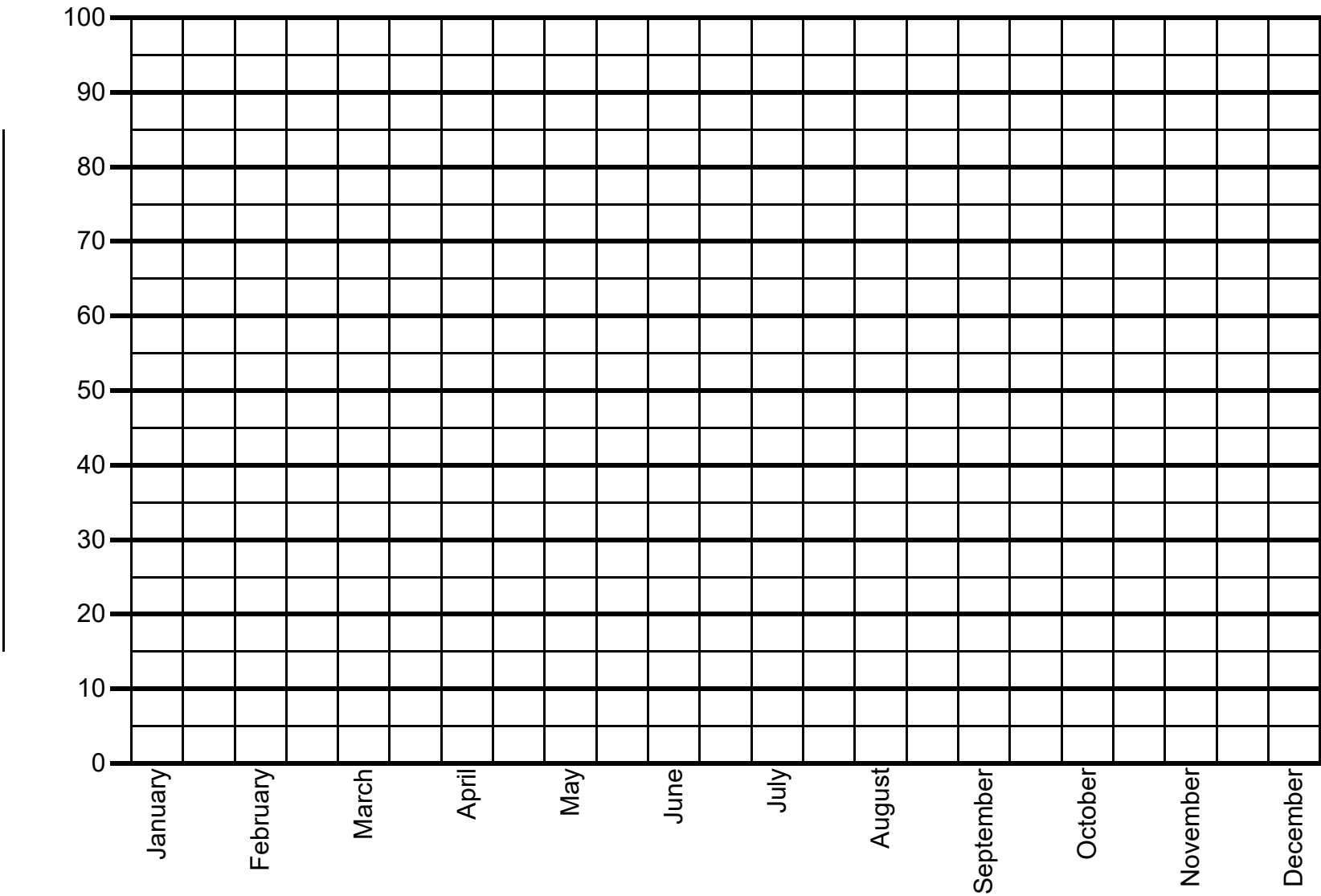
Date: _____

Venn Diagram



Mean Monthly Temperature at Fort Washita, Indian Territory
for the year of: _____

Name: _____



Seasonal Rain Totals at Fort Washita, Indian
Territory 1848

Name: _____

Spring	
Summer	
Fall	
Winter	

 = 1 inch of rain

Included are three letters from John R. Whaley to his brother-in-law Rudolph Palmer. Whaley was a soldier in the U.S. Army's Light Company M, 2nd Artillery and was stationed at Fort Washita for at least one year. He was born in Loudoun County, Virginia, about 1833. He enlisted in 1854 at 21 years of age and served for five years before being discharged at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. His enlistment entry describes him as having hazel eyes, light brown hair, a ruddy complexion and 5'7".

Sources:

U.S., Army, Register of Enlistments, 1798-1914, Ancestry.com

U.S., 1850 Census, Ancestry.com

"Letters of John R. Whaley, Light Company M 2nd Artillery" folder, Fort Washita, vertical files; Research Center, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Fort Wachita, Chickasaw Nation
November 1 1855

My Friend-

I have once more seated myself in order to write you a few lines to let you know how I am getting along. I have at last reached my destination and I am very well pleased with it. It is a very lonesome part of the country very few inhabitants except for Indians. I left Baton Rouge the thirty first august on board a steamer for Memphis where we arrived September 3rd and landed on the arkansas side opposite the city the night we landed it was raining very nearly all night we have no shelter that night but the heavens I did not think hard of it as it was out of the power of the officers to prepare anything that night we had good tents we remained there two days and then took up the line of march for this place a distance of five hundred miles after the first days march we lay by two days and continued our march the road was very indifferent for one hundred miles after we marched to Little (Rock) one hundred and fifty miles from Memphis the remainder of the road was very good. Arkansas is thinly settled and the settlers are very unsociable. A great many of them live in houses neither chinked nor duab'd. The land east of Little Rock is principally a low black soil. West of that is mostly sandy until you get near the line it is then a mixture of limestone and appears to be very strong. Water is very scarce in many places. I can not say that we suffered for water but we often had to drink standing water. We buried five men on the march they died with diarrhea some of them were buried in a blanket on the wild pharaille. We marched some twenty-five miles of pharailles in the state and a about seventy-five in the Territory. Fort Wachita is twenty miles from Texas and hundred and fifty from the Arkansas line one mile from the false Wachita river. There is a small town one half mile from the Fort containing fifteen or twenty houses three stores and a post office. There is a great many Indians around the fort, all civilised. The greater part of them can speak english but do not like to do it.

I must now tell you some little about myself. I am enjoying good health and in good spirits. I get up in the morning at six o'clock and go to the stables and we feed and curry two horses a piece and water them and return to quarters and have breakfast half past seven. Go to drill at nine and drill one hour and at three in the evening the same. At four we go to the stables again, feed, water and curry. There is some cleaning out the stables and feeding while others curry. Every man has a certain part to do. I am better pleased with the As my than ever it is a nice lot of men in the company it number seventy six have forty eight horses working four to each cannon. The officers here are very kind indeed. Their names Brevet Major (Henry Jackson) Hunt, Colonel (Braxton) Bragg, Lieutenant Lang de Canueil, Quartermaster Green. ? Hunt served in Mexico in Duncan's battery. Bragg you know much about him. I can tell you this is a very healthy place it is getting cold here we feel it very sensible on account of the hot summer.

I will say nothing more at present you will hear from (me) again soon so farewell dear brother. Once more rite soon if you please. Give my love to all.

Devotedly your Brother,
John R. Whaley

Directions John R. Riley, Light Co. M 2nd Arty, Fort Washita C.N. in care of
Sergeant Riley

Rudolph Palmer

John R. Whaley to Rudolph Palmer, 1 November 1855; "Letters of John R. Whaley, Light Company M 2nd Artillery" folder, Fort Washita, vertical files; Research Center, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Fort Washita, C.N.
Nov. 25, 1855

Dear Brother

I have once more taken my pen in hand to write you a few lines to let you no i am well and in good spirits. I am doing as well as i could wish at present with one exceþtion and that is I have no girls to go see to pass away the idle hours which appear very long to me. For at such times I often get to thinking of home and friends and relations far away for I no that some of them mourn for me as lost to them forever, but if it is in God's will i hope too meet them all again and if i do it will be in better circumstances than when i left. if I cannot, I shall never. I aam inclined to think there is yet something in this world for me if i seek it properly which is i intent to try to do. I have made bad use of my time so fari must admit, but there is yet time for improvement. I am now master of the sabre drill which I am very fond of. It suits my tastes exactly. I have got cavalry and battery drill to learn. Battery drill is very laborious. you may no when we handle a piece weighing a thousand pounds and only four men to do it. There is four horses for each piece and two drivers. I am a driver but I have to learn all branches of the drill.

Most everything is very dear here except buckskins and deer meat which is very plenty and cheap. Coffee is very saleable at 25¢ a pound. A pair of citizens boots are worth from six to ten dollars a pair. In fact all kinds of merchandise is very dear. Cor in worth \$1.25 per bushel. Cattle are cheap you can (own) the best of cows from ten to fifteen dollars a piece. If you want beef you can kill it where ever you find it. We killevery hog that comes about the garrison. The most of the Indians are mostly very dirty. some of the wimen are very good looking. It would make you laugh to see them fight. They are not allowed to strike. Their mode of fighting is pulling and pulling their hair and butting. I have two horses to see after the horses are all very wild and when there is forty eight of them taken out of the stables together it is really dangerous to be anywhere near them. or even on their back is a cushioned rear and lump there is very few men get hurt. You must tell all the children howdye do. Give my love to Susan and all inquiring Friends write to me often if you please. I have not heard from you since I enlisted. No more at present so farewell once more.

Devotedly Yours
John R. Whaley
Light Co. M 2nd Artillery
Fort Washita
Chickasaw Nation

John R. Whaley to Rudolph Palmer, 25 November 1855; "Letters of John R. Whaley, Light Company M 2nd Artillery" folder, Fort Washita, vertical files; Research Center, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Fort Washita, Chickasaw Nation
April 5 1856

Dear Brother-

I received your letter yesterday a week ago. It found me enjoying the best of health. I was glad to hear you were all well. You requested me to write you a description of our drill and the inhabitation of the country. As for the inhabitants are hard to describe. The greater part of them are a mixture of the white man and the Indian. You will see once and awhile a man from the states. The whites here have the same ways as the Indians with a very few exceptions. The Indians and the half breeds are great for having a variety of colors in their costumes. They have their pants made as a general thing tight to their leg and fringed down the sides. They have their coats of buckskins and different kinds of flowered calico, generally a red and a red fringe wherever it can be put, though most of them have a shawl between two and six feet square twisted around their head leaving the top bare.

The women generally dress in calico and wear moccasin shoes the dresses made in a very common style. A shawl or handkerchief around their heads. There is some very pretty girls among them. Everything here begins to look like spring of the year. We had weather here the middle of March at 90 degrees in the shade. the prairies are green with grass. We grass our horses about three hours a day. I will give you a description of my drill in my next letter.

I must now close as it only wants ten minutes to nine and I go on post at that. I am on guard tonight. Give my love to Susan and the children and all inquiring friends.

Your Brother
John R. Whaley

Light Co. M. 2nd Artillery, Fort Arbuckle C.N.
Excuse this. I will write more next time.

Hurrah for Fillmore and Donelson

John R. Whaley to Rudolph Palmer, 5 April 1856; "Letters of John R. Whaley, Light Company M 2nd Artillery" folder, Fort Washita, vertical files; Research Center, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Chickasaw Clothing in the 1850s



Images courtesy of Chickasaw Collections, Seawright Collection



Image courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society



Image courtesy of Chickasaw Collections, Seawright Collection

Arrival in Indian Territory Viewing Guide

1. Why did the Chickasaws leave their historic Homeland? (0:30)

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forcefully removed the Five Civilized Tribes to Indian Territory.

2. What were some things Chickasaws lost by leaving their historic Homeland? (0:45)

Farms, burial grounds, crops, fields, institutions.

3. What kinds of hardships did Chickasaws face on Removal? (1:20)

Death of loved ones due to harsh conditions and disease and loss of supplies.

4. What issues did Chickasaws have once they relocated? (2:55 – rebuilding, 3:03 – other tribes, 3:43 – issues with the Republic of Texas and intruders)

Rebuilding: They had to rebuild homes, schools, businesses and communities.

Other tribes: The other tribes considered the Chickasaw's new land their territory and were raiding east from their territories.

Issues with the Republic of Texas and intruders: There were multiple attacks from Texas militia who were retaliating against those same tribes who had been attacking Chickasaws. There was theft by the intruders and hostile confrontations.

5. What was the purpose of Fort Washita? (4:44-6:04)

To help maintain peace in the area and defend against other tribes and intruders.

6. Which president visited the fort when it was just a camp? (6:03)

President Zachary Taylor.

7. When was the fort established? (6:24)

1842

8. What kinds of products were traded at the fort? (6:40)

Corn, wheat, oats, rye and cotton.

9. What is their water source? What are the nearby rivers? (7:42)

Washita River, Mississippi River, Red River.

10. What did the daily lives of the soldiers consist of? (7:58)

Reveille, flag raising, and firing of the cannon. Construction in areas of the fort.

Photo Analysis

1. Observe (look at the photo)

- a. Who is in the photo?
- b. Are there any objects in the photo?
- c. What is happening in the photo?
- d. What are they wearing?

2. Analyze and Interpret

- a. Can you tell when the picture was taken?
- b. Can you tell where the picture was taken?
- c. Do their faces look happy, sad or something else?
- d. Why do you think this photo was taken?

Analyze a Written Document



Meet the document.

Are there any special markings on the document? Circle all that apply.



STAMP



POSTMARK



HANDWRITTEN
NOTE



OFFICIAL
SEAL



SPECIAL
LETTERHEAD



OTHER

Is it handwritten or typed?



BOTH

Write down any words that you don't know. Then look up the definitions.



Try to make sense of it.

What is the main idea of the document?

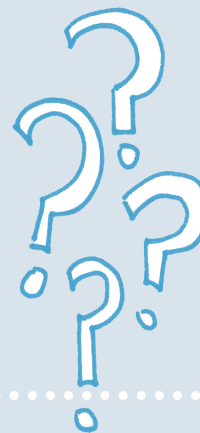
List two quotes (words from the document) that help support the main idea.

Observe its parts.

Who wrote this document?

What is the date of the document?

Who read or received this document?



Use it as historical evidence.

Where do you think you could find out more information about the persons who wrote or received this document?

Where do you think you could find out more information about this event?

