

JAY, E. E. (MRS.) INTERVIEW
MOON, DON (MRS.)

10159

415

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

JAY, E. E. (MRS.)

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MOON, DON. (MRS.)

Field Worker's name Don Moon Jr.

This report made on (date) February 28, 1938

1. Name _____

2. Post Office Address _____

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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 7.

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Don Moon Jr.
Interviewer.
February 28, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. E. E. Jay & Mrs. Don Moon
Guthrie, Oklahoma.

In November of 1889, our father, A. L. May, came down from Kansas to see what he thought of Oklahoma Territory. He liked it so well that he went back and sold out and in January of '90 moved the family to Guthrie. At first he ran a feed store on the corner where the First State Bank is now located. The family lived in the back of this building. Mose Weinberger says that Father also rented a small office space from him for a real estate office, but none of the family remember that. However Father used to say that he had tried almost everything, so we do not doubt that he dabbled in real estate during the first few years in the new town.

Two of our brothers, Alex and Chutes, ran a meat market in West Guthrie for a while. Much venison was sold in the market as deer were plentiful here. One of those brought into the boys' market was so large and had such fine antlers that they had the antlers mounted, and from then on it hung on the dining room wall and served as a hatrack until it was given to Paul Carpenter of 2017 West Logan, Guthrie, in 1922, and is now one of his prized possessions.

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Hardly a month after moving to Guthrie, on February 13, 1890, a daughter was born, while they were living at their first location, the present First State Bank corner--they named her Guthrie. Several babies had been born in the city before that, but most of them died during infancy. So far as we know she is the oldest person now living who was born in Guthrie, but of course, we may be mistaken about that. Her name and address is Mrs. John R. Bullington, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

For awhile the family lived on North Eleventh Street. Father rented what was later called the "John Massey place" --one mile west of Guthrie and planted 40 acres of it to watered melons. It was a dry year but he had a fair crop, and shipped the first carload of melons from Guthrie. For several years the two oldest boys raised melons on rented land. They grew well on the virgin land. They shipped them to Kansas City and Denver.

In November of '90 he moved to a 22 acre tract of bottom land that lay between the Cottonwood and the Cimarron Rivers. At first he leased it, later buying it from Phil Coleman, a negro who had filed on it. This land was in Section 31, Township 17, Range 2 West.

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There were fine big trees along the river, and "May Park" became the favorite picnic ground. Boating parties came down the Cottonwood from Guthrie. In 1903 a cyclone destroyed so many of the trees that the park was practically ruined. Much later--about 1909--motor-boats were operated on the Cottonwood by P. J. Heileman, and the "White City Bathing Beach" was opened on the bank of the Cimarron. Since the water of the Cimarron is salty, bathing in it resembled sea bathing and is considered beneficial to the health. Father did not operate this bathing beach or have any interest in it, except that he leased the land to Mr. Heileman. We have a post card picture of the "White City Bathing Beach."

From the time we moved on this place, father's main business was truck gardening, and he supplied the grocery stores of Guthrie with fresh vegetables every week-day morning for many years. He also manufactured horseradish, called "Red Mule" from the picture on the labels on the bottles--and--supplied the Guthrie stores with that product.

The family lived in a hastily built one-room frame house for the first year after they moved on the place. One morning

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our six year old brother, Joe, could not find his pants,
-a rat had carried them off to line his nest.

Our house of native stone was finished in 1891. It consisted of a basement, kitchen and dining room, and a story and a half up from that. A smoke house with a basement large enough to hold 100 bushels of sweet potatoes, and a milk house were also made of the same stone.

Father planted an orchard and a vineyard, and raised enough livestock to supply all the needs of the family and have a little surplus to sell. Besides raising an abundance of every known variety of vegetables for the market, -sweet corn was one of his specialties, and Rocky Ford Cantaloupes.

Sugar, salt, coffee, spices, flour and occasionally some fresh beef were all we ever had to buy in the way of groceries. But he sometimes had to buy corn and feed for the stock as 22 acres was not enough land to raise much feed crops.

About 1900 people began to be interested in replacing the barbed wire they had first used with better stuff. So

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Father left the boys to run things at home and covered seven counties in Central Oklahoma/^{Territory} selling Page Woven Wire Fence. He drove a team of ponies--one black the other white--to a buggy and that outfit became well-known to most of the farm families in this section of the state.

One tiny girl, sighting this team in the distance, announced to her father, "Here comes that man that talks all the time and doesn't say anything but 'Page Fence'."

He continued selling fence during the fall and winter months when the gardening work was not so heavy until about 1910 when he resigned because his advanced age made it hard for him to travel, eat strange cooking, and sleep in different beds each night. Because he sold so much of their product, the Page Fence Company invited him to visit the factory and offices at Akron, Ohio, with all expenses paid. That was about 1909.

There was a natural ford on the Cottonwood just west of the house, and that was the only way we could get to Guthrie for many years. In 1902 the county built a bridge across the river on the Seventh Street road, but a man named Murray who held the land between our place and this bridge would not let

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us cross his land. Finally the county bought a strip along the Cottonwood bank for a road, and our negro hired-man, Jim Godfrey, cleared a road through the timber to the new bridge. The old ford was never used after that.

Mrs. Jay (Roxie May) went to school in Guthrie for about a month just after we moved here. The school was in a store building in the same block in which we lived. It must have been about where the Guthrie Wall Paper and Paint Store is now. The main thing she remembers about going to school is that there was a colored boy attended. Later they had separate schools. After a month the folks sent her back to Kansas to live with her married sister and finish the school term.

Joe, the youngest brother, went to school to Miss Marguerite Byrne when she began teaching in a part of a hotel on Seventh street in 1892. Miss Byrne is still teaching in the Guthrie Schools. This hotel was later used as the main building when the State Deaf and Dumb Institute was located at Guthrie. It is now a negro hospital. The first school buildings were built in 1894.

Myrtle May graduated from the Guthrie High School in 1901 when classes were small. There was no High School building

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then, but a room or two in the Central Grade Building was used for this purpose.

Miss Etta Hikes who began to teach in the Guthrie Schools in 1893 was her teacher in the eighth grade, and also her Latin teacher all four years in High Schools. Miss Hikes still teaches Latin in Guthrie High School.

Mrs. Jay tells how she and her sister Myrtle were boat-riding one evening with a young neighbor, Billy Marquardt, when they had quite an experience. It was just about dusk, and one of the girls glancing back, saw the face of a man following the boat. It was the body of a man who had been missing for several days. The oars had stirred the water enough to cause the body to rise and float in the swirl behind the boat. Some weeks after he was buried, an investigator came over from England and had the body exhumed. An associate was later tried for murder but acquitted.

The family joined the First Baptist Church of Guthrie soon after it was organized and there are some of the family still on its membership roll.

Father died in 1923, two years after mother, just lacking four months of reaching his 88th birthday.