

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (Mrs.) INTERVIEW #5265

Form A- (S-I49)

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
INDIAN-PIONEER HISTORY PROJECT FOR OKLAHOMA.

Field Workers Name Nannte Burns

This report made on April 12, 1937,

1. Name W.L. ( Williams Lennox) McWilliams . (Mrs.)

2. Post Office Address Miami, Okla.

3. 23 A St. NW.

4. Date of birth April 29, 1865.

5. Place of birth Lewis County, Mo.

6. Name of father George W. McWilliams.

7. Other information about father

An early pioneer, Captain of a Company of Militia (Missouri)

Lewis Co. during the Civil War.

8. Name of mother Lucy M. Clapp a lineal descendent of the Mayflower

Pilgrims of 1620.

9. Number of sheets attached 6.

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

5265

Nannie Lee Burns, Interviewer  
Indian-Pioneer History Project

Interview with Mrs. W. L. McWILLIAMS,  
23 A St. NW, Miami, Oklahoma

W. L. (Williams Lennox) McWilliams was born April 29, 1865, in Lewis County, Missouri. His father, a pioneer of Harden County, Missouri, married Lucy M. Clapp who was born and reared in the old Bay State and whose parents, both born with the name of Clapp, were lineal descendants of passengers who came to America in 1620 in the Mayflower.

George W. McWilliams, father, was killed by lightning in 1873, leaving his wife with three small children. The mother aided by the children and a small income sent the children to the rural schools where W. L. fitted himself for a rural teacher, later teaching in Ravina, Nebraska. He secured a position in an implement store in Ravina and while working here, in his spare time he read medicine. Afterwards he entered the Medical Department of the University at Louisville, Kentucky, graduating from there in the spring of 1891.

#### Early Pioneer Life

In that same year he married Laura E. Scott,

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

5265

2

daughter of Granville and Ellen Scott, and he and his wife came to Melrose, Kansas, with his eye on the new country to be opened. Dr. McWilliams attended the first lot sale of deeded lots held in Indian Territory in May, 1891, and bought for the sum of \$30.00, Lot 1, Block 97, Miami, Indian Territory (copy from original Deed attached) the present location being the Northwest corner of B SW and Central Ave., East, now occupied by a filling station. He immediately began the erection of a three-room frame dwelling, one room for an office and the other two for a home for his wife and himself, moving into it before the windows and doors were placed and only strips of the floor laid and with the stovepipe passing out of the window. Here he began to practice medicine, going to Baxter Springs, Kansas and Seneca, Missouri, on the east and as far as he could south and west, driving a large bay draft horse to a two-wheeled cart, except in muddy weather when in the absence of roads he was compelled to go horseback. He continued this mode of travel for two years when he replaced his cart with a buggy.

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.)      INTERVIEW.      5265

3

### Later Activities

Being successful he began investing his earnings, and his life is inseparably connected with the early development of Miami for there are few of the early projects with which he did not have some connection. In 1895, he erected a two-story native stone building 50 x 80 feet at the southwest corner of Main and Central, containing two store rooms below and a large hall above, known as the McWilliams Hall. This was used as a place for most of the public activities, dances, United States Court, etc.

Shortly after 1900 this building was extended forty feet in the rear and a third story added. The second and third stories were fitted up as an Opera House which was considered at that time as the finest in northeast Indian Territory. This building has housed the United States Post Office, the Territorial U. S. Court, the old Alpha Pharmacy, the First National Bank and various offices.

Recently this building has been purchased by W. W. Dodson who is converting it into one of the most

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

5265

4

attractive buildings on Main Street and has named it "The Miami Building."

In the late nineties Dr. McWilliams was one of the four local men who built the City Water Works and the Electric Light Plant and shortly after 1900 was also one of the four who financed and built the old Toll bridge at the foot of Main Street which served this community for many years, later being sold to the state. When the present structure was built, the old bridge was moved and now serves the people living north-west of Miami. It is located at the old Stepp Ford and is now known as the Stepp Bridge.

Active along professional lines, Dr. McWilliams was an honored member of both County and State Medical Societies and at one time served as Vice President of the former and was also a member of the Indian Territory Examining Board and a member of the United States Pension Board of Miami.

Prominent locally for his political activities, he helped to organize the local Republican Party and until Statehood served as treasurer of the Indian Territory

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.) - INTERVIEW.

5265

5

and Oklahoma Republican Committee. In 1900, he was sent to the Republican National Convention and was chosen as one of the Committee to notify Theodore Roosevelt at his Sagamore, Oyster Bay Home of his nomination. He was chosen by McKinley as postmaster for Miami, serving seven years.

#### Later Years

Having been moderately successful, he gave less time to his profession and served as active Vice-President of the First National Bank here, but one of his greatest pleasures was his interest in stock raising and he blocked better than twelve hundred acres lying north and west, joining the present town of Narcissa, six miles southwest of Miami. In a trade some years back he traded this and became the owner of a large ranch on Cabin Creek in Craig County which together with a smaller acreage of 265 acres two and one-half miles southwest of Miami, he owned at the time of his death. At the latter, you could find him a part of each day and here he continued to feed and ship cattle when not engaged professionally. During his activities as Vice-

McWILLIAMS, W. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

5265

6

President of the bank he had discontinued practicing medicine but later after retiring from active life he had again opened an office and devoted a part of his time to the profession and at no time was he known to refuse his services to his old friends.

Thus on April 6, 1932 passed one of the foremost pioneers of this section, a man useful to his generation and respected by all who knew him.

7

## WARRANTY DEED

THIS INDENTURE, Made this 29th day of June in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety-One, between the Miami Town Company and Willie L. McWilliams.

WITNESSETH, That the said parties of the first part, in consideration of the sum of Thirty and no/00ths Dollars to them duly paid, have sold and by these presents do Grant and Convey to the said Willie L. McWilliams and Laura W. McWilliams, the following described Real Estate lying and being in the Indian Territory and Town of Miami, viz;

Lot Number One (10) in Block Number Ninety Seven (97) within the Town of Miami, in the Indian Territory as now platted and said plat recorded within the office of the Secretary of the Interior of the United States of America. To have and to hold to the said grantee and their assigns forever. And the said grantors do hereby covenant with the said grantees that at the Ensealing of these presents, the premises above described are free from all incumbrances and that the said MIAMI TOWN COMPANY will WARRANT AND DEFEND the title to said grantees, their heirs and assigns against any lawful claims of all persons whomsoever.

8

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, The said grantors have hereunto set their seal and caused these presents to be signed by their President and countersigned by their Secretary this Twenty Ninth day of June. A.D 1891.

THE MIAMI TOWN COMPANY

By, Benj, S. Warner                      its President

and O.J. Nichols                      its Secretary (L. S.)

Beforeme, Ira C Perkins, a Notary Public, in and for Cherokee County, Kansas, this day came THE TOWN COMPANY by Benjamin S. Warner, its President and O. J. Nichols its Secretary, who are personally known to me to be the same persons whose names are subscribed to the within Deed as having executed the same, and who then and there acknowledged the and within to be the act/deed of the said Company.

In witness whereof which I have hereunto set my hand and Notarial seal this the 3rd day of July A. D. 1891, My Commission Expires Dec. 6, 1891

Signed, Ira C. Perkins.

Notary Public.

9

CERTIFICATE OF RECORD (attached to deed )

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INDIAN TERRITORY, NORTHERN DISTRICT

I, Charles A. Davidson, Clerk of the United States Court and  
 ex-officio-Recorder in and for the Northern District, Indian  
 Territory, do hereby certify that the instrument hereto  
 attached was filed for record in my office the 14th day of  
 November, 1900 at 2 P. M. and duly recorded in Book I, Page 397.

WITNESS my hand and seal of said Court at Muskogee, in  
 said Territory this the 15th day of November A. D. 1900.

Chas. A. Davidson  
 Clerk and Ex-officio Recorder

By, H.K. Butler

Deputy.

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Outside of Deed.

No I

THE MIAMI TOWN COMPANY

to

Willie L. McWilliams,  
 and wife.

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Town of Miami.

Filed for Record on this 3rd day  
 July A.D. 1891 at 2 30 o'clock P.M.

Recorded in Book No. I at page 7

of O. J. Nichols Secretary  
 Recorder

10

Miami Town Company

Deputy

Northern District, Ind, Tm.

FILED for record

Nov. 14th, 1902 at 2 o'clock P.M.

Chas. A. Davidson

Clerk U. S. Court

H. H. Butler D, C.

B.I P. 379