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BURNS, SARAH ISABELLE

INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ruby Wolfenbarger  
 This report made on (date) June 16, 193<sup>7</sup>

1. Name Sara Isabelle Burns  
 2. Post Office Address Sentinel  
 3. Residence address (or location) Sentinel  
 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 5 Year 1866  
 5. Place of birth Illinois

6. Name of Father James Jones Place of birth Illinois  
 Other information about father Soldier in the Civil War  
 7. Name of Mother Sara Ann Moore Place of birth Illinois  
 Other information about mother Left a widow with five children to  
care for.

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 6.

I was born November 24, 1879, in Oregon County, Alabama. I left Alabama at an early age with my parents and moved to Texas. We stayed there until I was eleven years old.

We moved into Oklahoma in 1890; it was the Indian Territory then. I came through with my parents. We had six wagons. My brother and about six cowboys drove our stock through. We had about fifteen head of cattle and eight head of horses. We were on the road just one day and one night. It rained almost all the way. We had to cross on the ferry boat at Dexter, Texas; it cost one dollar per wagon and twenty-five cents per head for our stock.

We located twenty miles east of Ardmore, on Wilson Creek. Our house was a double log house, made from logs that were about eighteen feet square. The door shutters were made from post oak timbers. These were also used for shingles. We had brought our furniture with us from Texas. We had wooden

beds, cane bottomed chairs, and a cast iron cook stove. For our fuel we used wood and corn-cobs. We had a pretty good well of water which stood about one hundred yards from the house. Some of the settlers would have to dig a well every few days. In those days some of the ground in which these wells were dug would prove to be quicksand and the water from these wells would be very muddy and impure. You could get water by digging just a few feet.

We located in this part of the country because it was better farming land than the land we had in Texas. We broke the soil with a turning plow, and also used a single stop cultivator.

We raised corn, all kinds of food stuff and lots of cotton. Sometimes we would pick cotton until February and March, and then would turn the rest of the cotton under. We paid all the way from fifty to seventy-five cents a day for picking cotton. We raised lots of corn and would take it

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to Ardmore and sell it for twenty-five cents per bushel. We would plant about fifteen acres of sugar cane; then we would make sorghum every fall. My father had a twelve foot pan and he cooked our sorghum in this. He would take two pieces of sheet iron and make a smokestack, leaving one end open to put in the wood. This would be cut into pieces to fit. The mill was pulled by one horse. It kept one person busy skimming the syrup and another person busy putting the syrup into gallon buckets. The fluid which was skimmed off was used to make vinegar.

In those days we churned in cedar churns. It was quite a job to wash and clean up these churns.

My mother always put up lots of fruit and pickles, all kinds of vegetables, tomato catsup, and other things. We always had our own meat from animals which we raised. We bought one wagon load of meat with us from Texas, along with about

sixty-five gallons of lard. We had our corn meal ground about twice a week. We had to go to Ardmore for our flour and other foods. We made our soap and didn't know what it was to go to town for soap. We ironed our cotton clothes with old fashioned flat irons, which we heated out of doors under a tree.

Sometimes people would have a log rolling. They would invite everyone and then the crowd would cut down trees or build a new log house, whichever the host wanted. The women folks would cook up a big dinner. They would have a corn shucking and would shuck corn all day, then at midnight they would have a big supper.

People built their chimneys out of limestone rock.

We had to get a doctor from Ardmore. He would come out in a buggy and would take lard, meat, and meal for his payment.

For entertainment we had lots of dances. My

boys would keep themselves in clothes by playing the fiddle, banjo, and guitar for these dances. People would dance most all night. Everyone came in buggies and wagons.

My husband's mother was a full blood Cherokee Indian. She was very pretty, walked straight, and was well educated; his father was a white man.

My father leased a lot of land from a full blood Chickasaw Indian. This Indian rode a little painted pony, wore his hair braided down his back, did not like to speak to anyone, and when he did he would just grunt.

The Indians killed their meat out of the woods. There was lots of wild game here. The Indians had their own graveyard. When an Indian died they would bury him with his saddle and blanket. They would build a little house over the grave.

The first car that I ever saw was in 1907. It was the mail car out from Tishomingo. The men had

cut down and grubbed up all the stumps for it to pass. My children and I stayed in the yard and waited all morning for it. Finally it drove up. Of course, it was a Ford.