MARTIN, MARTHA JANE. INTERVIEW. Form A-(S-149) 496

4169.

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

ld Worker's name Ethel D. Pfeiffer.

s report made on (date) May 25, 193 7.

Neme Martha Jane Martin.

Post Office Address Duke, Oklahoma.

Residence address (or location)

DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 2 Year 1870.

Place of birth West Tennessee, Carrol County.

Name of Father T. J. Moore Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about father Served in the Civil War.

Name of Mother Nancy Elizabeth Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about mother Religious wife and mother.

s or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story he person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. inue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of ts attached 6.

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Ethel D. Pfeiffer,
Interviewer.

The Experiences of a Pioneer
Of Oklahoma. Martha Jane Martin,
Duke, Oklahoma.

My husband, father, and brother came to Greer County, Oklahoma (Texas then) in December 1886, to look for a location to move to and to homestead. They built a one-roomed house, broke land and dug a well, worked on the place until March, then father came back for mother and me. I had had a child born during my husband's absence, and she was three months old before he ever saw her. It was warm when we started for Oklahoma in a covered wagon. A neighbor family by the name of Brandon, a woman, four children, and a brother, came along with us in their wagon. As we came, we camped one night near Beard City and my child became very sick and we got a doctor. The night was warm and father had stretched the tent facing the north. It blew up a blizzard and we had to set up all night with the baby and could not have fire on account of high wind; we almost froze. We wrapped up in bed quilts, but our feet got frostbitten. The next morning father reported the condition of the child to the doctor. He said to wrap her up well and bring her into town that she had symptoms of pneumonia, and we would have to stay

over until the weather abated, which we did. We were delayed three days. We came on and it was very cold. We all located near each other and began life in Oklahoma.

We got our fuel by diggingmesquite roots out of the ground, which made a good fire. Our nearest town was twenty-five miles away, Quanah, Texas, where we got all supplies and mail. Our nearest neighbors were seven miles away. We had been here a short time when we heard the Indians were going to raid the new settlement. They resented the whites coming in and we would all gather in one place at night so we would all be together in case they came. This went on until the scare was over. We all had guns for protection as well as providing ourselves with meat. There were large herds of antelope. They would come close enough to shoot at. I have shot at them but never killed one myself. The men would bring them in and I would cook them on the fireplace in pots, skillets and dutch ovens. The hams were fine to fry, and the other cuts were stewed or roasted.

There were so many wolves and coyotes it was almost impossible to raise chickens. There were many rattlesnakes. Two of my neighbors and myself kept count of the rattlers that were killed in one year. It was something

over seven hundred. There were so many snakes I was always scared to death of them. I did not have any coffee mill. One time I parched my coffee and started to mother's to grind it. I had my baby in my arms, and my can of coffee also. In moving I heard something rattle and started running for I thought I was on a rattlesnake. As I ran I learned it was the coffee in the can.

My father and husband broke the first land in this (Jackson) County. While they were away breaking land for others to make a living my mother would stay with me at night. She lived about one-half mile away.

The wild cattle would get between the places, and she would have to hollow and whoop to shoo them away until eight or nine o'clock at night before she could come over.

We went up on Turkey Creek one summer and worked through harvest. I cooked for the farm hands of Mr. Guthrie, for logs enough to build a dugout.

We had sand storms and our dugout wasn't very tight. The sand would sift through and nearly stifle us. We could hardly breath. One time it blew for three days

and nights. My brother came and we had to leave the dugout and go to fathers. We had a three years drouth about ninety-one or ninety-two, and we raised nothing but a little cane. They were hard times and we had little to eat. I gathered mesquite beans in the fall and parched them for coffee, also parched sweet potatoes for coffee. Our stock ate the mesquite beans and got fat on them.

The mesquite roots taken green and boiled with real strong old iron or copper would make a pretty golden colored dye. Also we made pretty purple colored dye of milk parsley weed, the same way. My husband cut cord wood for Mr. Warren McFarland for one dollar per day. The first time we tried to have church the preacher was a fraud. He preached at my house and all he knew about the Bible was that the whale swallowed Jonah. Three families were present. Father and mother always were church-goers and he took up for the preacher until he discovered he was only a bum and wanted to be fed.

Our first school was a subscription school of three months. As the country was settled, each man that planted cotton donated two acres and what was made on it for the building of a schoolhouse. The country was being settled

fast and when it rained we raised good crops. The first cotton we planted made 1300 pounds and we hauled it to Quanah, Texas, to get it ginned. When we got there we found no gins and no one buying cotton. We started to Wichita Falls, Texas, to get rid of it when a man in Quanah said he would give two dollars per one hundred pounds if he never got rid of it, so we let him have it.

It was twenty-three miles to the nearest doctor. We didn't have a doctor often. When I was confined my mother waited on me. When I had sick children I doctored them with home remedies. I am the mother of ten children. All lived to be grown. Seven live in what is now Jackson County.

I worked in the field with my children except when I had a small baby. I picked around two hundred pounds of cotton per day and nursed my babies. The girls plowed and chopped cotton. We lived for years in a dugout with a dirt floor, and no one knows how much washing there is in raising a family of children crawling around in the dirt. But by and by we built a four-roomed house which we later traded for a hotel.

The hotel rented for $65.00 per month but soon there

was a town fight on and the town was moved away. We got very little out of the hotel. All I have left is my little three-roomed house which is in a bad state of repair.