

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (MR.)

INTERVIEW #10469

198

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

199

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (M.A.) INTERVIEW 10469

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora L. Lorrin,

This report made on (date) April 14 1938

1. Name Mr. Esther Fleeman,

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 102 South Miles Ave.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 24 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father Robert Fleeman Place of birth Virginia,

Other information about father Died 1920 about 1854.

7. Name of Mother Mary (Aiken) Fleeman Place of birth Virginia,

Other information about mother Died in 1902 about 1854

Notes of 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.

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (MR.) INTERVIEW 10469

Mrs. Nora L. Lorrin,
Investigator,
April 14, 1933.

An Interview with Mr. Esther Fleeman,
102 South Miles Ave., El Reno, Okla.

Esther Fleeman was born in Cedar County, Missouri, May 24, 1873. His father, Robert Fleeman, was born in Virginia about 1854 and died in 1920. He was a Union Soldier in the Civil War. His mother, Mary (Aiken) Fleeman, was born in Virginia, about 1854 and died in 1902. The Fleemans came to Oklahoma in the fall of 1904. Mr. Fleeman was one of seven children, only four of whom lived to maturity. They were farmers and lived about a mile from a river and this river was full of fish. As a boy, Mr. Fleeman swam, fished and hunted along this river. He went to a log schoolhouse and the children often played hockey, by slipping through the cracks where the chinking had fallen away. They would catch the teacher off guard and out they would go. There were coons, opossums, mink to hunt. The Missouri farming land is rich enough to raise most anything but the upland is rough and rocky and very hard to work with. Mr. Fleeman married May Ishaw in 1898 and when they came to Oklahoma in 1904 they had a little girl four years old.

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (MR.) INTERVIEW 10469

- 2 -

They came through, from their home in Missouri, in a covered wagon accompanied by Mr. Fleeman's brother-in-law bringing their household goods along with them so there were two covered wagons. When they passed through Springfield, they saw large apple orchards with the apples thick on the ground and it seemed a pity for all of those apples to go to waste that way. Coming through the mountains of Arkansas proved to be a great hardship, as some of those mountains were almost straight up.

The Fleeman party came through Fort Smith, Arkansas, and stopped there to visit Mrs. Fleeman's people for awhile. And after they left Fort Smith, Arkansas, they tried to come through Indianola, but the bridge was washed out and they had to detour and they got into some rough country and had to use both teams on one wagon to pull up the hills. They did that occasionally while they were coming through the Arkansas Mountains, also. Somewhere on their way they had to cross a river on a ferry boat, the river was up, and there were no railings on the ferry and the horses were restless and came near sliding off into the deep swift current. This frightened Mrs. Fleeman almost out of her senses and while they were coming

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (MR.) INTERVIEW 10469

- 3 -

through the mountains they were overtaken by a bad thunder shower and were thoroughly drenched. They tried to find a house somewhere so that they might go in out of the rain and dry out by a fire but they were unable to locate one but finally ran onto a log schoolhouse and went into it and built a fire and stayed all night and until they were thoroughly dried out. The next day they were lost and did not know which way to go. They came through the Chickasaw country and saw many Indians who were very dark, probably Chickasaws. These Indians were peaceable and did not bother the fleemans in any way. They drove across Oklahoma, and stopped at Hydro in Caddo County. Their business was farming and they rented a farm from Mr. Lee Woodruff, a carpenter who lived in Oklahoma City, and farmed it for eighteen years, raising cotton, corn, and livestock. They got along pretty well until the drouths struck them and after that it was pretty hard going. They never owned a farm of their own. The farm on which they lived was just six miles west of the Colony Indian School. A man of the name of Cain ran a store at Colony and they traded with him, and so have been to the Colony Indian School many

FLEEMAN, ESTHER (MR.) INTERVIEW 10469

- 4 -

times. Mr. Fleeman has attended a good many Indian dances, one that he especially enjoyed was at Weatherford, a long time ago. They came to Canadian County in 1931, and during '31, '32 and '33 is when he had his hard luck. He farmed in Canadian County three years and did not raise a thing. They went back to Caddo County, and came to El Reno about four months ago, and settled at 102 South Miles Street. He does not own this place, just rents it. Mr. Fleeman likes Missouri, but since he is a farmer, it is so much easier to farm on land that is free from roots and rocks, that he much prefers farming in Oklahoma. Mr. and Mrs. Fleeman had four children, two boys and two girls. Their youngest boy got burned to death in California, by an exploding gas stove. One of their children lives in Colorado and one in Oklahoma City.