

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

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GERLACH, MARGARET MOODY.

INTERVIEW.

9851

Field Worker's name Alson J. Chase

This report made on (date) January 21, 1938

1. Name Margaret Moody Gerlach

2. Post Office Address Woodward, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1115 Texas Avenue

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 16 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Colorado on a ranch

6. Name of Father Robert Moody Place of birth England

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Cathryn Allen Place of birth Kentucky

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 _____.

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Alson J. Chase
Investigator
January 21, 1938.

Interview with Margaret Moody Gerlach
1115 Texas Avenue
Woodward, Oklahoma

I was born on a ranch in Colorado in 1873. My father, Robert Moody who was born in England, was a cattleman and banker by trade. He was a partner of P. T. Barnum, the show man. Later we moved to Texas and owned the P. O. Ranch near Canadian, in Hemphill County, and it was here that I was married to John J. Gerlach.

My husband made the race in 1893, came in on the train from the Oklahoma-Texas line near Higgins, Texas. He staked a lot and started a store and bank all in one tent. He brought the groceries for the store with him when he came, and had a charter for a bank already to open for business. I came in January, 1894. The town was mostly tents and shacks. We had a city block where we started a home. In the Spring of 1894 we put out trees around our block and paid 20 cents per barrel for water to keep them watered. Lots of the supplies for the soldiers at Fort Supply were purchased at the Gerlach store.

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In the Winter of 1894 a Mr. Shaller froze to death while out freighting. At that time Woodward had no cemetery so he was buried on some state school land. This land was used for a cemetery for several years. Later, the land was to be used for a Government experiment farm so all bodies had to be moved.

I was one of the charter members of the First Baptist Church here. It was organized in 1897 by five people, Mun Baker, Mrs. Nick Hudson, S. L. Metz, Judge Thomas L. O'Bryan and me.

Mr. Gerlach was County Treasurer of Woodward County in the early days. I was a charter member of Woodward Coterie Study Club in 1897 - this club also looked after charity and organized the first library. It was started with nineteen members; each member donated \$10.00. The library was open two days a week with different members acting as librarian. Later the city bought this library and operated it a while, then May 1, 1917, it became a Carnegie Library and is still maintained as such.

We were the parents of three children, Alice Marie was born November 4, 1894; she married Dr. Joseph C.

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Stephenson; they had one child, Margaret Marie. Margaret Louise was born December 12, 1896. She married Josh Lee, United States Senator. They have two children, Robert Joshua and Mary Louise. John J. Gerlach, Jr., was born October 19, 1898, and died November 20, 1900. My husband died December 16, 1931.

Dr. Stephenson was head of the Anatomy Department of the University of Oklahoma for twelve years. Josh Lee was head of the Public Speaking Department of the University of Oklahoma.

I still live in Woodward and on the same block of ground on which we started in 1894.
