

GILBERT, JAMES S.

INTERVIEW

#9090

12

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

Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan

This report made on (date) October 18 1937

1. Name James Samuel Gilbert
2. Post Office Address Lamont, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  blocks west of Highway No. 60
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 1 Year 1858
5. Place of birth Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas.

6. Name of Father David Nelson Gilbert Place of birth Taylorville  
Spencer County, Kentucky

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Mary Martin Place of birth Washington  
County, 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL. INTERVIEW.

9090

Elizabeth L. Duncan  
Interviewer  
October 18, 1937.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

James Samuel Gilbert  
Lamont, Oklahoma.

James Samuel Gilbert was born eighteen miles west of Leavenworth, Leavenworth County, Kansas, October 1, 1858. He was one of four children born to the union of David Nelson and Mary Martin Gilbert, the oldest child being Mattie.

His father served in the State Militia during the Civil War. He also was the one who led the regiment of the State Militia that was supposed to be headed by General Kerr, but Kerr deserted his post and David Gilbert took command of the troops to keep Pat Price from going on into Kansas City. He then was dubbed "Captain" by General Curtis of the regular troops from Fort Leavenworth.

After the War, his father resumed his old business of buying cattle.

On one of these trips, in the year of 1869, James accompanied his father on a buying expedition to

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

2

the range around Abilene where the cattle were all brought in. The cattle were brought in from Texas, and they were raw-boned, long-horn cattle of no quality, but the people accepted the long-horns because during the Civil War the cattle were killed off so that it would take considerable time for the people to build back to where they were. The Texas people were scared to death to drive the cattle through the Oklahoma Territory as the Indians were always on the outlook for such. Once in a great while the ranchmen would venture to drive the cattle across the great prairies of Oklahoma into Kansas to market. So, after the War, the North needed cattle so much, and Texas had plenty to spare, the ranchmen decided to drive a great herd through to Abilene, Kansas. They started in February and landed in Abilene in May.

While James' father was there buying cattle, James was having the time of his life with the Texas cowboys. They kidded James about going back with them, said they would tog him out in a cowboy outfit. James would have gone, only he did not want to go to his father and ask him and then hear him say "no", so James did not go.

3

Then they returned to Leavenworth where they began the cattle business again.

In 1875, James' father moved to Drury, Kansas. Their farm was located a half mile from Drury.

In 1879, James and his father then went into the sheep business. They went down into Arkansas, Elgin, close to Ft. Smith. They would run the sheep down in<sup>to</sup> the strip fifteen miles south of the Chikaskia River. They were afraid to come too far down in here.

In 1884, they ran the sheep into the southeast corner of Pratt County, Kansas, and then Kingman. They wintered there. They were in the sheep business for nine years. They went in the cattle business, with horses and mules as a side line.

In 1890, they brought what cattle they had down into Oklahoma on the Cozad Ranch, southwest of Hunnewell. There they sold out to Cozad.

In 1891, September 22nd, at the Sac and Fox Opening, James went to Chandler, forty miles southwest of Guthrie. Ed Chaney took a homestead on Cottonwood Creek. James bought some cattle and shipped them back to Kansas.

Ed Chaney and James went to Guthrie and put in a

4

butcher shop. Ed Chaney ran the butcher shop while James made trips down into the Washita and Chickasaw countries, seventy-five miles from Guthrie, to buy cattle. They then quit the butcher shop and made preparation to make the Run into the Cheyenne and Arapaho Opening, April 16, 1892.

Ed Chaney and James started to make the Run. They were going to try to get town lots, so they could put in a butcher shop there. They were supposed to go to Kingfisher to register but instead they stopped seven miles from Watonga. It was after night when they arrived. They were over in the Strip. They camped and while they were camped there a couple of United States Deputies ran across them. They had lost their way and when they ran across the boys, the men asked how far they were from Kingfisher. The boys put them on the right trail. When the day arrived for the Race, the people who were going to take town lots were to run on foot.

The signal was given and the Run was on. The boys got a town lot, and when the United States Deputies came in to check up on the lots, these same two deputies

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

5

who had run across the boys in camp, ran into them again. When the deputies recognized the two boys, they said, "Well, I see you folks got in here all right" and laughed. The boys set up a butcher shop. They were really not caring whether or not they stayed. The boys would go to Ed's place to get cattle, as they had stocked up with cattle before they had made the Run. The boys stayed with the butcher shop for about four months, then quit and went back to Guthrie.

In July, after the boys sold out, James went back to Guthrie and bought up horses and mules and went back to Hunnewell where his father was and then took the stock down to the Cozad Ranch to let them run the range.

Then in August, the soldiers came down in here to make the ranchers move and take their stock out of the Territory. In order to get the cattlemen out of here, the prairie was set on fire, burning the grass off so the cattlemen would have to move to feed their cattle.

Then preparation was made to make the Run on September 17, 1893. James came down to Hunnewell to

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

6

register. He saw he would have to stand in line, so he happened to see a man back of the booth. He went over to him and asked the fellow how he could get to register. The fellow said here is a bucket, go get some water and take it into the office, but James did not know what to do with Marion, so he asked the fellow what he would do with him. The fellow said he is small, he won't be noticed if he follows you in. James and Marion went in. James put down a \$2.00 bill and he asked the men to register them. The men took the \$2.00 bill and registered James and Marion. James said it was a dirty trick, but he had to put the wheat in and also exercise the horses.

The ones in the Gilbert family who were preparing to take homesteads were Mattie Gilbert Huffman, James, Will and Zula Gilbert, and Marion Gilmer, a neighbor boy.

The morning of the Race was a busy time, five rolls of bedding to do up, five lunch boxes to fill, and a canteen of water for each, so everyone could spend the night by himself. .

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

7

They had lunch at 11 A. M. Then they drove to Chaney's on the State line where they were joined by Charlie and Bill Chaney, Willis Graham and Pete Huffman.

At 12 o'clock, everyone got in position for the start. Not a sound was heard as the people were afraid if they were yelling and shouting it would prevent them hearing the signal.

Bill Chaney was standing on the cart seat watching. He jumped up and shouted "there they go." They were all off. Will, James and Zula were all riding together, James had built a box on the front axles of a buggy and they had hitched two horses to this. James was afraid the horses would become frightened, but they did not.

The ground shook and it sounded like thunder. It was a sight never to be forgotten. The young people will never have the privilege of witness<sup>ing</sup> any<sup>thing</sup> like that, except in pictures as they are shown on the screen.

Bluff Creek, with its very high banks, was a mile from their starting place, and at this place is

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

8

where the shafts were broken, but they held together. James, not knowing how bad it was broken, did not stop, but went on. Each one of them had stakes with their names on them.

Soon James and the rest began to slow down and they looked to see what time it was. It was one o'clock, so they staked their claim. James' was the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 14, Township 25, Range 3.

That evening they all got together and ate supper out of their lunch boxes. Then they spread bedding on the ashes of the burned prairie. It was not the first time they had slept on the ground.

---

At twelve o'clock there was quite a number of the people gathered on the Salt Fork and ate dinner. The rest of the provisions were left for James and Graham, as the rest were going back to Kansas. James and Graham were going to stay to keep a watch out for the homesteads, and also to build buildings.

James broke out twenty acres of sod on his place while waiting to file, also he had built a half dugout and frame building. They hauled the lumber from South Haven.

GILBERT, JAMES SAMUEL.

INTERVIEW.

9090

9

Men with families stayed in the Territory. The first winter, a subscription school was started and then a meeting was held the second year to vote for school.

In December of 1893, James went to Enid to file. He did not have trouble to file as so many others had. After filing, James went back to his homestead, and then back up into Kansas to bring down twenty head of horses and fifteen head of cattle and his farming implements.

The first well that James dug was witched. A well was witched with a peach tree limb. It turned out to be very good water and it still produces water.

---

The first two years, crops were burned up and James was not a farmer, he was a cattleman. James dealt in cattle when he was in Kansas and he could not get away from it. It seemed that was his line.

In 1895, James took a bunch of horses and mules over into <sup>the</sup> <sup>country</sup> Osage to summer range, then they brought them back in the fall.

In 1896, James heard that cattle were selling cheap in Kentucky, so he thought he would go to Owen-bury, Kentucky, to buy fifty head of cattle, but when

10

he got there, the cattle were higher than he was willing to pay, so he went to Henderson to buy mules and horses, thirty miles from St. Joseph, Missouri, but did not get them. He then went over close to Plattsburg, where he bought a carload of <sup>u</sup>mules.

Then James went into the mule business. He has purchased three other farms since he came into the Territory and homesteaded, and they are all mortgage free.

James is now living in Lamont.

---