

HARRIS, JANE L.

INTERVIEW

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HARRIS, JANE L.

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

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Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) November 30, 1937

1. Name Jane L. Harris

2. Post Office Address Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month X Day X Year X

5. Place of birth Mississippi

6. Name of Father Alex Erby Place of birth X

7. Name of Mother Lucinda Erby. Place of birth X

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 3.

Maurice Anderson,  
Investigator,  
November 30, 1937

Interview with Jane L. Harris  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

I was born in Mississippi and was fifteen years old at the close of the Civil War. Before the War ended I was owned by Master Erby, who owned a large farm. The women had to plow in the field just like the men. After the War ended my father and mother stayed and farmed for Master Erby.

I came to the Indian Territory with my husband, Alford Mosley, in 1868; we came from Texas to Pauls Valley on the train. The railroad had been built through here a year before we came to Pauls Valley. My husband went to work on the farm for W. G. Kimberlin. Then there were but a few negroes living in this part of the country.

Pauls Valley and Whitehead were the places where we bought our groceries. We didn't have to buy much in that day and time for there was plenty of wild game and we always had plenty of corn to take to the mill.

The only grist mill then was on the Washita River east of Pauls Valley about two miles. My husband would take a sack of corn to the mill every two weeks.

At that time there were several farms along the river here and the prairies were covered with cattle. There were very few roads and no fences to speak of.

After my husband died I married Nathan Harris, who had come to Pauls Valley at the close of the Civil War, with a white man named Jonathan Morris. I have heard him say that Smith Paul was the only man living in this valley at that time and that he lived in a two-wheeled wagon and had one saddle horse and a yoke of steers. Nathan helped Mr. Morris turn under three hundred acres of sod for Mr. Paul and plant in in corn. After the corn was planted Nathan helped Mr. Paul build his first house, a one-room willow-log house without a door and the house had a dirt floor with a deer hide hung up for the door.

Nathan told me he worked two years for Mr. Morris, farming for Mr. Paul. Corn was all they raised and it was sold to the Government at Fort Sill and Fort Arbuckle. The soldiers would come from both places and haul the corn. In this way Nathan said, he got acquainted with several of the soldiers from both forts and one of the soldiers from Fort Arbuckle gave him a sword. This soldier was later killed by the Indians after he was sent to Fort Sill.

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After Nathan and Mr. Morris, had made two corn crops for Mr. Paul, Mr. Morris moved on up the river west of where Mayville is now and Nathan stayed on and worked for Mr. Paul. By this time there were two or three families living in this valley, there were no stores here then. I have heard Nathan say there was a trading post on the river later named Cherokee town. When Nathan came here there were lots of Indians camped on the river around where this trading post was. W. G. Kimberlin was among one of the first to settle here after Nathan came here and after Mr. Kimberlin settled here, Nathan went to work for him.

In the early days after Mr. Kimberlin came here I have heard Nathan say that Frank and Jesse James visited at Mr. Kimberlin's home several times. Nathan's job was to take care of their horses when they would visit Mr. Kimberlin and they would always give him a plug of tobacco as Jesse always had plenty of chewing tobacco in his saddle bag. Both Frank and Jesse carried two six shooters, one strapped on each side of their saddle.

After Nathan and I were married Mr. Kimberlin built us a house where West town of Pauls Valley is now and gave it to us and I still live in that house.