

WILLARD, J. A.

INTERVIEW

9730

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

WILLARD, J. A. - INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Lillian Cassaway

This report made on (date) January 18, 1938

1. Name Mr. J. A. Willard

2. Post Office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 102 West Texas Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 26 Year 1872

5. Place of birth Leavenworth City, Kansas.

6. Name of Father Myron B. Willard Place of birth Illinois

7. Name of Mother Maggie Bailey Willard 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 2.



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Gassaway, Lillian - Investigator.  
Indian Pioneer History-S-149.  
January 18, 1938.

Interview with J. A. Willard  
102 West Texas, Anadarko, Oklahoma.

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My father, Myron B. Willard, was born in Illinois, date unknown, and died in 1880. My mother, Maggie Bailey, was born in Kentucky, date unknown, and died in 1912.

I came to Ponca City for the opening of the Strip in 1893. People were there in every conceivable conveyance lined up on each side of the Strip, sometimes four and five deep two hundred miles long. The claims were marked with stones with the land marked but sometimes if you didn't know how to read the markings the claims were hard to locate, and sometimes the stones were hard to find.

I first lived in a sort of a dugout which had poles laid across the top, with hay on top of that. A friend and I lived in this all through the winter of 1894. It was in January or February that a dreadful snowstorm came. It snowed for thirty-six hours without stopping and there were drifts six, eight and ten feet deep. My friend took sick and I had to go after medicine for him. There were no roads and I rode my horse through snow almost up to his stomach

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all the way to town.

I got to Ponca City when there was nothing there but a rag town. The first frame building to go up was a saloon; it was only a shack with one board walls. Where the Pioneer Woman statue stands now used to be two ravines, with bridges over them which were called the twin bridges. I have seen this ground covered in prairie grass, then a cotton field.

In 1901 I came to Caddo County where I had drawn a claim north of Fort Cobb. Here we lived in a tent until I could build a house. The lumber was hauled from Anadarko and it took two days to make the trip. It was the first time I had left my wife and children alone at night. There were only coyotes, cattle and Indians to be afraid of; but my wife was only afraid of the Longhorn cattle.

There were no schools as yet, but we soon started one. There was no building we could use, but a neighbor said to use his dugout if we wanted to so we started a school in this dugout with eight pupils. We used this dugout for three or four terms of school. I then moved to Anadarko when my children were ready for high school.

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I have really pioneered in three countries; Kansas, where my father pioneered when I was small, and two parts of Oklahoma.

### The Indian Jail

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Located at the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache Agency  
Anadarko, Oklahoma.

This building was made of native stone gotten from the hills around Anadarko, and was used for many years before the opening of the country in 1901.

