

INDEX CARDS:

Chickasaw Nation
Madill
Living Conditions
Greer County

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

Field Worker's name Virgil Coursey

This report made on (date) July 20, 1937

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1. Name Mrs. J. Covington
 2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma
 3. Residence address (or location) 521 East Pecan
 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1881
 5. Place of birth Arkansas
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6. Name of Father Joe H. Thompson Place of birth Georgia
Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Ellen Monroe Place of birth Alabama
Other information about mother Ellen Monroe's father was nephew of
President Monroe

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 _____.

Virgil Coursey
Interviewer
July 20, 1937

Interview with Mrs. J. Covington
Altus, Oklahoma.

We lived in the Ozarks of Arkansas near Calico Rock and Milburn. We were very poor with no future except hard work and with little chance of acquiring an education, and in all probability growing up to be typical Ozark mountaineers. My father, J. H. Thompson, reasoned that if his family was ever to get a break he must do something about it. Mention of coming to Oklahoma was always met with opposition by my mother because she pictured Oklahoma as a dangerous country where we were certain to be killed by Indians.

My father took five of us older children and struck out in the wagon for what we thought was west Texas. We were in the Indian Territory before he told us we were in Oklahoma. Mother had remained home with the smaller children. We arrived near Madill in 1892 with a wagon, two plug horses and a little house hold equipment. Two of the children were nearly blind with sore eyes. I was about eleven when we made this move to Oklahoma.

We settled on I. O. (Sat) Lewis' place. Mr. Lewis was an Indian and everybody called him Judge Lewis. He owned a

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lot of land. My father took over his property and sublet the land. I have a very high regard for Indians. The Indians drank quite a lot, in fact, anything they could get that would make them drunk, but they were never violent and were accommodating and friendly.

There were log shacks scattered over Mr. Lewis' land and we lived in one of them. After we got settled father broke the news of where we were to mother and she came. She always showed the true pioneer spirit and her fears and doubts seemed to vanish as she became used to the new order of things.

Those early days were filled with hardships. We worked very hard and suffered many inconveniences. I can remember when we had to strike a match to find our cotton sack in the morning and strike a match to weigh up the last sack at night. But with all this we children were never out of school. Father lived to be sixty-five and saw his children get the very best education he could give them.

I was fourteen years old before we cooked on a stove with eyes or lids over the cooking surface.

Our clothing was made by hand for sixteen years, because we had no sewing machines. This was slow and tedious.

COVINGTON, MRS. J.

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All socks and stockings were knitted and had the good quality of lasting indefinitely. My father has often helped knit stockings.

We owned the first surrey in the community and the first organ. Each was considered quite a novelty.

One of the most popular forms of amusement was croquet. On Sundays the boys got together and rode calves and had a lot of fun with this sport.

My father left Arkansas owing eleven hundred dollars. I think he owed a Mr. Tom Matthes. Every effort was made to reduce this indebtedness. Cotton brought only five cents a pound and other products in proportion. In not over three years the last note was paid off. Father was so glad that he called us all to see this cancelled note.

I married in Madill and moved to Erick. My husband was a school teacher. We homesteaded in Roger Mills County. One year later our shack washed away and we filed in Greer County at the head of Hay Stack Branch on the old Fisher Ranch. We lived at this place for five years and bought property ten miles east of Mangum. My husband died at Blair.

I moved with my single daughter to Washita County. We have now been living in Altus some two months. My daughter works at a beauty parlor and we live alone.