

DISHMAN, SARAH P.

INTERVIEW

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

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DISHMAN, SARAH P.

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#13217

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) March 14, 1938 1938

1. Name Sarah P. Dishman

2. Post Office Address Henryetta, Gen. Del.

3. Residence address (or location) Gilliam Addition

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 18 Year 1866

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father John See Place of birth West Virginia

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary Lambert Place of birth Ohio

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 12.

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Grace Kelley
Investigator
March 14, 1938.

Interview with Sarah P. Dishman,
Henryetta, Oklahoma.

On September the 26th, 1878, when I was twelve years old, my father sold out in Arkansas and we started to Texas. My baby sister was weakly but we didn't think about her not being able to make the trip. The first night we camped in the most beautiful place I had ever seen. We were traveling in a covered wagon. That night the baby was taken sick and died the next morning. Mother was heartbroken and couldn't leave the baby alone so we stayed in this country instead of going on to Texas. Father rented a place from Jackson Lovens and put in a farm. That was where Spiro is now. There were three other children who were older than I was and we learned to pick our first cotton the next fall.

Old Store - 1878.

There was a store and post office on Camp Creek on the Fort Smith road. It was called the Camp Creek Store and was owned by Joe Bowers.

Skullyville.

There was only one store with the post office in it, and there were a few homes in Skullyville on the Fort Smith road.

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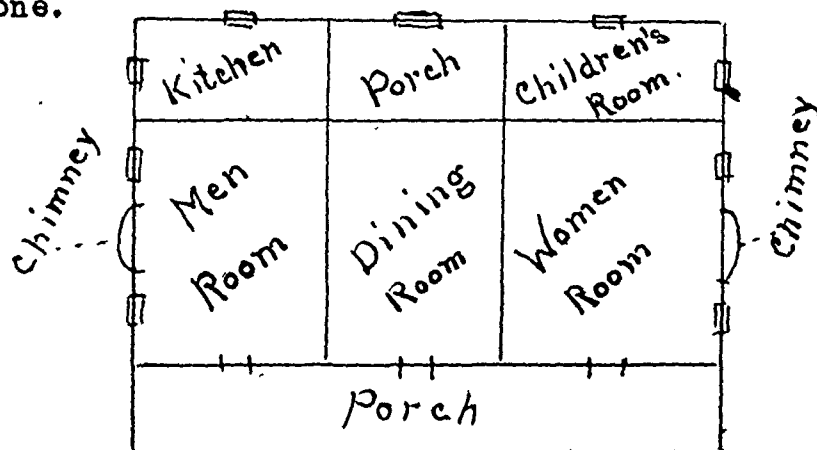
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Childers' Station, 1881.

In 1881 I married and went to live with my husband's uncle and aunt, John and Nancy Childers, who owned the Childers' Station on the stage route between Fort Smith and Muskogee. They were Cherokee Indians. He had a little store and the post office was in his front room. The pigeon holes were in the corner. Aunt Nancy fed the passengers and had beds for them. There was a barn in the back for the horses of the stage. Sometimes she fed or roomed other travelers, but not often as they usually camped out.

It was a double-room, hewed log house. The long hall between was closed in at each end to make a dining room. There were five rooms altogether. Each front room had a chimney at the end, one of these rooms was only for men and the front room, the other was for women if there was more than one or for a family if there was one.



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As you will notice there was no connecting door into the dining room and everyone had to go outside to go into it for there were only two outside doors. Both of these doors were on porches though.

Childers owned this station until the mail was changed and he freighted all his supplies from Fort Smith which was forty-five miles away. It was across the creek from Sallisaw.

"T" Trail.

The T. Trail was from Kansas to Texas. It ran from Coffeyville, Kansas, to Delaware, and to Nowata and left Fort Gibson on the right-hand side.

Indian Home.

My husband took a claim on the Big Sallisaw River. Someone built a cabin and my husband paid him \$5.00 for it. He didn't have to pay for the land for as a citizen of the Cherokee Nation he was allowed to claim as much land as he wanted. For two years he farmed a little. That was a good claim but he wasn't satisfied for some reason. We moved to Claremore when Cleveland was President and then back to the Childers' Station. Nobody was rich but a few Indians had hundreds of cattle. They had free range and just let cattle multiply until some buyer

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came along and took them away. Most of us lived hard but when I look back I love those days more than the later ones.

For four years I lived in cabins with puncheon floors, stick and dirt chimneys and we cooked on the fireplaces as I didn't have a stove of any kind. I baked good bread in an iron skillet with a lid in the place of an oven.

People were good and would help you without pay. They would cut your wood, go after a doctor on the darkest and stormiest night if you needed one, do your work, whether it was washing the dishes, clothes or outside errands during sickness and death. Of course there were outlaws but they were soon captured and didn't usually bother people like us.

Deputy U. S. Marshal, 1884.

John Childers, Jr. was named for his uncle. He was appointed Deputy United States Marshal in 1884 and served under John Salmon and others. Then Frank Vore of Webbers Falls wanted to quit being United States Indian Policeman, so he recommended my husband to take his place.

I was glad when they appointed my husband as a United States Indian Police because it wasn't so dangerous, though I had my worries even then. He wore a uniform and was ordered to

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go to different places like an army officer. Mr. Dishman was away all the time and I was just a young girl; sometimes he was stationed ^{at} a place where I could go along with him but other times I just had to wait for his return.

When he was stationed at Muskogee there was only one store there and it was owned by Cap Severs. I boarded with L. T. Parnell. Then the Patterson General Merchandise store and the Turner Hardware were put in. (I have a cape of plaid wool that was bought at the Patterson store about 1900). Mr. Dishman was a Peace Officer and his duties were similar to a those of a city policeman.

HARTSHORNE INTRUDERS.

My husband was sent to Hartshorne when they were having trouble. The white Intruders were taking all the land and the Indians wanted them to leave. The soldiers from Fort Leavenworth were sent in there to help keep the peace. The captain detailed a certain number of soldiers and a corporal to my husband. Some of the whites were already packed up for they knew they would have to leave. Their things were loaded into wagons and taken out of the Indian Territory and the land they had been using was turned back to the Indians. The white people were taken to Fort

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Smith for trial but the Indians had their own courts.

Old Permit

My sister, Mrs. Annie Calvert, has the permit from the Choctaw Nation to rent from J. Smedly Forrest in 1887. It is signed by M. N. Cass, County Judge, and attested by Robinson Bacon, County Clerk, and is dated January 1, 1887. Mr. Calvert paid for a permit every year until his death.

Vian in 1889.

When the Missouri-Pacific first went through we were living at Tanaka. Tanaka means Town. We went to Vian and kept boarders for the people just flocked in there. The railroad coming through caused the rush of outsiders. We lived in a double hewed log house until we could build a ten room-frame house. It was Vian's first hotel.

Whiskey was brought from Fort Smith and sold to the Indians as well as to the white men. Two men got drunk and when the commotion was over four men had been killed; one of them was Isaac Gurdy, the Deputy Sheriff. An old negro laid them out on the ground and the men had to put dirt over the blood that was all over the ground. Bill Thompson, a fullblood Indian, confessed to Mrs. Blue Foreman when he was on his death bed that he had killed Isaac Gurdy.

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Cottonwood in 1880.

In 1880 there was a settlement of white Intruders who lived on Camp Creek on the road from Fort Smith. Selomon and Betty Watts were the oldest folk there and I lived with them. Jeff Watts had a store and post office which was called Cottonwood. Every family was some relation to the other families. There were at least a dozen of these families and maybe more. Some had pretty good homes while others weren't so good. Some had good wells and the other families carried water from them. They were good people and claimed to be Indians but were not.

Muskogee in 1902 and 1903.

The second time I lived at Muskogee I saw it really grow. The most important improvement was when they put the water works in. Some of us had cisterns and wells but I bought water in the barrel that had been hauled from a creek near the town. It cost 25 cents a barrel. In the summer ice was shipped in on the trains and we bought it whether we could afford it or not. The water wasn't fit to drink in the hot weather without it. There was only one school in Muskogee.

Fair of 1884.

The fair at Muskogee was for both the white people and the Indians. There were all kinds of stock, fowls, race horses,

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needle work, canned goods, tomahawks, feathered caps, etc. We camped by Lige Ross' home when we went to Muskogee to the fair.

The ladies rode in the races but rode side-saddles and wore a riding habit except Belle Starr and her daughter Pearl, who rode bareback. That is, they rode sidewise with just blankets and no saddles at all. They were expert riders and as graceful as could be. I knew Pearl well but wasn't really acquainted with Belle, although of course I knew her when I saw her.

I didn't run in any of the races though I had been riding all my life, at least as long as I could remember. When I was a young lady one time I was running my horse. When he jumped a little creek the girth broke and he went one way and I went the other. I was in bed a long time and am still crippled in my hip. That fall has carried the blame for there being no children of my own in my home.

Claremore.

Claremore Mound was the first name, then Mound was dropped and it is just called Claremore. There were just a few houses there in 1885 and they were quite a distance away

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from the mound it was named for. There was only one hotel at Claremore, a frame two-story building. The rooms were just large enough to hold a bed, there wasn't enough room in them to turn around. You almost had to back out of one.

Major Light lived there. He was a Cherokee officer of high rank. His wife was named Archie before her marriage and she and her two sisters were teachers in district schools and at the Tahlequah Seminary. All of them were smart.

I knew Will Rogers when he lived on a ranch at Oologah in the finest home around that country.

Mineral Waters.

I was at McAlester when it was a small town. I was visiting a Mrs. Barbar and she and I walked out to the place where there was a big salt spring. It would be right in the town now but the town has changed so much that I couldn't locate it the last time I was there. The coal and oil had been developed but I don't think they ever did anything with the salt spring.

At the same time I learned of some springs at a town on the Katy. I am not sure whether it was Sulphur but it might have

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been. Some of the water was good for gas on the stomach, some of it was hot and some cold, and some of it was the sulphur water. I liked the kind we called "gas water" best though, because it was better than soda.

Christian Workers or Preachers.

In 1887 circuit riders traveled through the country, stopped with the believers and held meetings. They were careful to look after their own people or the ones already converted while they were trying to convert others.

The Baptists called themselves Missionaries, but there wasn't much difference between the missionaries and the circuit riders. If there was any it was that the Baptists paid less attention to their old members.

When I was about twelve years old I lived with Aunt Jane and Dr. Burton who were very particular with me.

Pioneer Church.

Brother Robert Fergerson called himself a Christian but he was a Missionary Baptist. He came to Cottonwood in 1880 and preached in an arbor. We sat on logs and there was no organ nor piano but we had good singing. Miss Alice Robertson was the Matron at the Minerva Home.

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The Harrell Institute was named for a Mr. Harrell who lived on East Okmulgee Avenue, Muskogee, but it was run by another named Brewer. The Bacone Baptist University was named for Reverend Bacone.

Sawmills.

The first sawmill that I knew about was owned by old man Morgan in the Choctaw Nation, a few miles southwest from Tamaha. That was before 1889.

Mr. Dishman had a sawmill between the Arkansas river and Braggs on a beautiful lake. The sawmill was a sixteen foot house and was also a grist mill. The sawmill ran every day but the grist mill was run two days out of the week. Mr. Dishman had four children by a former marriage who were almost grown. Mr. Dishman, the children and I ran that sawmill until the timber was sawed up then he moved it to Greenleaf where the dam is and stayed there two or three years.

Mr. Dishman hired loggers who had good teams for the hauling. He bought the timber, fifty acres in a bunch and could look at a tree and tell how many feet of lumber were in it. He kept from two to four men in the timber cutting besides the off-bearer and engineer at the mill. He did his own sawing until his

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health broke and he hired as little help as possible because the wood wasn't pine but was just native oak, cottonwood, etc. The farmers bought this lumber to build their improvements and couldn't pay much for it. The more help Mr. Dishman hired the less profit he had.