

NOEL, SARA (SALLIE)

INTERVIEW

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Interviewer: Hazel B. Greene
Hugo. 9-22-37

Biography of Mrs. Sara (Sallie) Noel
Antlers, Oklahoma.

Born: October 16, 1856
Near Indianapolis, Indiana.

Parents: Were named
John and Sara Weddle.

Near Indianapolis, Indiana, John and Sara Ann Weddle died and left two children, Sara Ann, commonly called Sallie, and Tom. They lived with neighbors, as best they could, until each got big enough to work, then they hired out, Tom to do farm work, and Sallie to do general housework. Sallie was with first one family and then another, and went wherever they took her. Finally a family she worked for moved to Atoka, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory. There she met and married Barney Noel. His name was Garnett Lee Noel, but the Indians could not say Garnett, or did not want to do so, so they just named him "Barney".

Barney Noel and his sister, Kate, were born and reared at Booneville, Kentucky. Kate married Marion Babb, and they went to Missouri, then to Atoka, where Kate died and her body was returned to Kentucky for burial. Marion stayed with Barney at Atoka, and they were partners in everything

they did. They bought cattle and hogs and furnished the meat markets at Atoka with meat. They took a notion to move to Doaksville.

It was in the winter time, about January, I believe 1884, when Barney decided to move from Atoka to Doaksville. It took us four days to make the trip. We had good teams and wagons, and we were young, and did not mind the hardships. In fact, they were adventures to us. We camped one night at an old Indian meeting house, I never learned the name of that place. The house was locked up, but a shed had been blown down and it made a shelter, under which we camped out of the snow. The next night we built up a log heap, burned it and warmed the ground, spread grass on that, then our beds on top, pulled our wagons up on either side, with a wagon sheet across from one wagon to the other and across the back, making a shelter from the snow and kept a log heap burning all night out in front. The next night we went over the hills to old Spencer Academy. There was no school there then, I imagine the school had been abandoned. We camped in the old school buildings that night, and were comfortable. I will never forget how beautiful the trees were laden with snow. The limbs of the trees overlapped the road. The horses could travel only a few miles each day. It looked like the snow was a foot deep.

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The fourth night we were nearly to Doaksville, and we stayed with friends about four miles from Doaksville. Then the next day we went on to the old fort place which we had rented. We worked a hundred acres of that place that year. We worked lots of negroes, I have written before how superstitious the negroes were. When we would have them eat at my house so as to save time, rather than have them go to their homes when we were very busy, those negroes would never eat much, they were so anxious to get out of that house, which was said to be haunted.

After a year at the old fort, we built a double log house at Doaksville. It was a good one of hewn logs, and we lived in it about fifteen years, until we built our home and established a store and post office at Corinna, in Pushmataha County where we ranched for twenty-five years.

We traded with the full-blood Indians. We bought their snake root, hides, etc., and in turn, sold them dry goods and groceries. We entertained them in our home, which was all very well until one old Choctaw Indian decided that he wanted to swap wives with Barney, whether we women liked it or not. Barney almost had to kill that Indian before he could convince him that

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neither he nor I wanted to swap.

We raised our boys up there, fifteen miles from Doaksville, north of the Towson and Cedar County line. We hired our own teacher, and had school right in our home for a couple of years. Then a few more white families came into the neighborhood, and we got together and had a school house built. Even then Barney paid the teacher, and my son Lee boarded her without charge. She was Miss Della Kidd, now Mrs. Della Bedford, Court Clerk of Pontotoc County, at Ada.

We had a preacher who would come along about once a month and when he came we would have church and Sunday school. We had pretty good times. Pioneering is not so bad if one is young and healthy.

In the fifteen years that we lived in Doaksville we owned different stores and had different partners.

Once, Barney and John D. Wilson were partners in a store. It had not been so very many years since the "Wilson War" on Clear Creek at the water mill, when the full-blood Choctaw Indians had run old John Wilson and his sons, John D., Willie, Edward H. and Rafe Wilson, all away over into Texas. John Wilson was wounded in that battle. He carried the bullet in his knee to his grave.

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The Wilsons had killed a couple of Indians in the battle and had left them lying on the store porch where they fell, and had wounded some more, but they had run to safety, across Red River into Texas, where they remained about four or five months.

Once, some of those Indians sought to renew the old feud, so they came into the store, one day while Barney was gone to dinner, and were going to kill John D. Wilson. He ducked under the counter, and his wife, Belle Turnbull Wilson, stood them off with a gun until some one ran and told Barney, and when he came the Indians sneaked away. But after that John Wilson didn't want to stay in a store any more. He wanted to be out where he could see all around him, and he would not be taken by surprise. So he sold out soon after that, and just ranched on his place down close to Swink in Choctaw County. This was the place where Swink was built afterward. Of course there was no Swink until the railroad was built through here in 1901 and 1902.

Our first couple of schools at Doaksville were held in old store buildings. Doaksville being an old settlement, there were always old vacant buildings.