

PETERS, JENNIE.

INTERVIEW

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

PETERS, JENNIE (MRS)

INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer.

This report made on (date) March 24, 1938. 1938

1. Name Mrs. Jennie Peters.

2. Post Office Address Greenfield Rural Route.

3. Residence address (or location) Four miles west of Greenfield.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 22 Year 1851.

5. Place of birth Joe Davis County, Iowa.

6. Name of Father Thomas Crawford. Place of birth Scotland.

7. Name of Mother Mrs. Crawford. Place of birth Wisconsin.

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 _____

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Augusta H. Custer,
Investigator,
March 24, 1938.

Interview With Mrs. Jennie Peters,
Greenfield, Rural Route.

My husband and I came on the train to Kingfisher, Oklahoma, the twelfth day of July, 1892. We came to Watonga in a hack or bus that carried passengers and mail across the country. We bought a claim on the north side of the North Canadian River, east of Greenfield. We stayed there only six months and sold the claim.

My husband was a farmer, and we decided to go into business. There seemed to be need for a hotel in Watonga, and we decided to build a hotel. This we did, and named it the Palace Hotel. It kept the name until about three years ago, when it changed hands twice in two or three months and is now the Paula Hotel, just east of the new post office. There were great times here in the early days. There would be long exciting trials in court and the hotel would be filled with witnesses and friends of the parties interested. One of the most thrilling cases

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was when Mass, a German of noble birth, married a low peasant girl and brought her to this country, got tired of her and shot and killed her. He gave himself up, was convicted and was sentenced to the penitentiary for his life time. He had relatives who offered large sums of money for his freedom at different times, but he never was released. He was an artist and has become noted for his murals on the walls of the State Penitentiary at McAlester. Then there were also cattle stealing and murder trials at different times. These trials always brought many people into Watonga. They would stay until the trial was over. That was before every one had cars. Court would last at least three weeks and we would be very busy keeping up the rooms and serving meals.

We had a little money when we came here and did not have as hard a time as many others did, who had nothing to start with and had to depend upon crops, or day labor. We never had any children, but reared two children of my sister. We kept the hotel until we got too old to do the work. My husband was ill a long time before he died, and that took our savings.

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I always worked and did what I could for every progressive public enterprise that was started in Watonga. The ladies had bazaars and socials of different kinds to raise money to promote the different churches and other organizations. We would piece quilts and sell them. I have a memory quilt that was made by the ladies of the city of Watonga. Anyone who wanted their name put on the quilt paid ten cents. This quilt has one hundred and fifty-eight names. Many of the prominent citizens of that time have their names on the quilt. This quilt sold for five dollars and I bought it. The proceeds went to the Methodist Church of Watonga. The quilt is now forty years old, and in fair condition.

I have some old photographs, and this is one of the first Court House and the County Officers at that time.

I saw Watonga build up from just a town of tents and shacks to what it is today. It is an interesting life to look back over. If my husband were living, we would still be living in Watonga.