

HENSON, JOE (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

#9297

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

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson

This report made on (date) November 19, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Joe Henson
2. Post Office Address Maysville, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) _____
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 25 Year 1891
5. Place of birth Beef Creek, Chickasaw Nation

6. Name of Father William Mays Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Deceased

7. Name of Mother Georgie Ann Thornton Place of birth Georgia

Other information about mother Deceased

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 _____.

Investigator, Maurice R. Anderson,
November 19, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Joe Henson,
Maysville, Oklahoma.

I was born at old Beef Creek in the Chickasaw Nation in 1891. My father, William Mays, and his two brothers went through the Civil War together and in 1872 settled in the Chickasaw Nation at a place later named by them "Beef Creek."

My father hauled lumber from Sherman, Texas, with ox teams to build his first house, and these three brothers started the Mays Brothers' Ranch.

I have heard my father say in the early days that they drove their cattle to Kansas. I can remember back when I was five years old, we lived in a large ranch house located on Beef Creek and about half a mile south of where we lived upon the hill was the other ranch house; both places were owned by my father and his two brothers.

At that time I was the only little girl on the ranch and the cowboys working for my father were always getting me some kind of a present. Every time they would take a bunch of cattle to market they would bring me back some-

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thing and on one trip they brought me a pair of red-top boots with silver plates on the toes of them and my name engraved on the plates. By the time I was big enough to sit on a horse my father gave me a horse and saddle. I remember every morning when the boys would saddle up for the day's work they would put my saddle on my horse; they wouldn't let me go on roundups and ride my horse. If I wanted to go I would have to ride in the wagon.

My two big sisters helped with the cattle just like men. One of my sisters married a Caddo Indian, and the other married a Cherokee Indian.

Every Saturday morning my father would send one of the men to the river for a load of white sand and in the house where we lived there was one room as large as the ordinary house today, and there was nothing in this room but a bench around the wall.

Father would have the floor of this room scrubbed with this white sand and sawdust and by noon on Saturday people from far around would begin to gather there for Saturday night and Sunday. There would be two or three preachers and we owned an organ. I have heard my father say, "the only one in this part of the country "

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There would be singing and preaching until Sunday night. One of my sisters would hold Sunday School every Sunday morning; if it was warm weather she would hold the class in the front yard.

There would be such a large crowd there to feed that my mother would have to carry eggs and butter over during the week. She would pack the butter and eggs in salt brine so they would keep until Saturday and Sunday.

A few years later there was a school house built near the store and they would use it on Saturdays and Sundays.

Nearly every Sunday there would be from two to four preachers at our home.

My mother was a Christian woman and didn't believe in dances but a bunch of the cow-hands talked her into letting them have a dance one Christmas night at the upper ranch house. She finally consented to let them have their dance if they would promise not to get drunk. Of course, they made her the promise, but before midnight, I have heard her say, they ended up in a big free-for-all fight and she never would let them have another dance.

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In 1902 there was a gristmill built on the river about two miles from our home and it was my job to take a sack of corn to the mill every Saturday morning.

Before this mill was built one of the boys would take corn to the mill at Pauls Valley.

When Maysville first started to build in 1902, it was named first Mays and later the name was changed to Maysville.

Doctor Thachard was Maysville's first doctor. He was the doctor here when Maysville was known as Beef Creek. I now live within two hundred yards of where I was born in 1891.