

HILL, J. F. (Mrs.)

INTERVIEW

#4831

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

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HILL, J. F. (MRS.)

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Field Worker's name Virgil CourseyThis report made on (date) July 16, 1937

1. Name Mrs. J. F. Hill
2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) 413 North Hudson
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father Jonas Swafford Place of birth N. Carolina

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Lucy Jane Elkins Place of birth Tennessee

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 3

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An interview with Mrs. J. F. Hill,
413 North Hudson, Altus, Oklahoma.

There was a dust storm raging when we reached Altus.

It was a cold day in November, 1898. We were in wagons and there were two families. I was a widow with three children. One girl married a Mr. Lattimer. They were with me, as well as another family named Cobbs.

Altus was a small place and we found it hard to buy anything to eat. We made coffee in a blacksmith shop. The trip took some three weeks from Erath County, Texas, but we had traveled leisurely and kept Sundays.

Fuel was scarce and every little stick found along the way was picked up and put in the wagon to cook with.

We did not settle here but went on north. I settled at White Flat nine miles west of Mangum. A year later I filed near Looney, a small post office no longer in existence. McQueen is the post office now. Mr. Lattimer filed at White Flat and Mr. Cobbs at Willow.

Life in the earlier days presented many hardships. Rain sometimes came into the dugout, the chimneys smoked and many other inconveniences were experienced. But in spite of this I liked Oklahoma from the start.

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As time passed my son became discouraged and went back to Texas. I never tried to hold my claim because I could not live on it. My daughter, Ada, married a Mr. Clure. She has been active in public work and helped transcribe the records at Mangum when Greer County was divided.

D. D. Tilley was a prominent man at White Flat. He wrote a column "Gee Whiz" for some farm paper. He gave vivid descriptions of this country and its possibilities, answered inquiries from people and did everything possible to interest people in settling up the country. He is now deceased. His widow still lives at White Flat and his son carries mail out of Olustee.

Another influential man was D. Frank Simpson living twenty miles northwest of Mangum. He was a big cow man with means. He still lives on his ranch.

Joe Thompson of White Flat was a prominent man. Other prominent men in Mangum were Andy Stewart, Judge Wells, Jude "J. E." Powers and Judge Todd, all lawyers. Judge Todd is still living and is a Civil War veteran.

J. C. and Tom Gilland were in the drygoods and grocery

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business and Charlie Hamilton ran a grocery store.

We had some cold winters after I came to Oklahoma.

One winter ice froze on wells which were twenty feet deep.

It was the coldest weather I have ever seen.

Spelling matches and debating furnished amusement for young people. There were also some protracted meetings. I remember going to Reed to the association. There was an arbor where services were held.

The first Methodist Church was built in Mangum about 1899. It was a frame building and a year later the Baptist Church at Mangum was destroyed by lightning and was rebuilt of brick.