

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Relief Administration, Dept of the Interior, Oklahoma

427

Field Worker's name Mannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) April 12 1938

1. Name Mrs. R. A. Seymour

2. Post Office Address Commerce, Oklahoma.

3. Residence Address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 23 Year 1879

5. Place of Birth Laxter Springs, Kansas

6. Name of Father Eldridge Brown Place of Birth Kansas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Malinda Wallace Place of Birth Iowa

Other information about mother _____

Notes or comments to be given by the field worker along with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to manual for general subjects and questions. General or specific questions may be added and attached firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4

SEYMOUR, R. A. (A.S.)

INTERVIEW.

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Nannie Lee Burns
Investigator
April 12, 1938

Interview with Mrs. R. A. Seymour,
Commerce, Oklahoma.

My father was Eldridge Brown, a Wyandotte, born in Kansas and my mother was Malinda Wallace, a white woman, born and reared in Iowa. My parents were married in Iowa and later came with the Zanes, the Longs and the Robitailles to the Wyandotte nation here. There were no houses and my parents stayed at the home of

Mrs. Mary Ann Zane, who built the first house built by a Wyandotte in the valley where the town of Wyandotte now is. They remained in her home until my father could build a small log house, consisting of a log room with a box lean-to, on the spot where Frank Robitaille now lives in the northeast part of Wyandotte.

My older brother and sister were born here but my parents, needing money, moved to Baxter Springs, Kansas, where Father secured employment for a short while and it was while they were living here on February 23, 1879, that I was born. My parents moved back to the home at Wyandotte when I was but a few weeks old and farmed that year. The Frisco railroad was built

through my father's land when it entered the Wyandotte valley where the village of Wyandotte was to be and the switch called then the "Shawnee Switch" was built on my father's land.

Before the establishing of Wyandotte, our community had received its mail at the place where the railroad crossed the Spring and Grand Rivers west of this place and the man who tended the water tank for the trains was the postmaster and the post office was called Grand River. After the establishment of the Shawnee Switch the town of Wyandotte was laid out and the post office was moved to a small frame store building on the south side of the ~~rail road~~ track just north of the place where the Wyandotte city jail now stands and Alfred Mudeater, a son-in-law of Charlie Robitaille who ran the store in this building, became the postmaster. At that time the valley where the town is located was all prairie and there was no timber on the hills around the town but the hills that surround the town are now covered with a growth of timber. I do not think that they paid my father anything for the right-of-way for the railroad. Along this right-of-way was the principal road through the country and it came from Vinita and followed the right-of-way into Seneca, Missouri, which

place was then our principal trading point.

The Wyandotte Mission School was then located on the land north of the hill where the buildings are now located and at the time I started to school there was only one small two story frame building and a few other small buildings. Later they purchased from my father the present site of the buildings which was my mother's land and moved the buildings up the hill to their present location. I was enrolled here when very young and attended school here until I was eight years old when I went with Janie Zane to the White Institute at Labash, Indiana, where I remained two years and again entered the Wyandotte Mission school as a pupil and later went to Haskell for three years. After my school days I worked in the laundry at the Wyandotte Mission school for three years.

I was married to R. A. Seymour on June 7th, 1893; he was born in Illinois in 1873 near the town, Franklin. His mother had Cherokee blood but they never attempted to prove their rights here and when a young man he had come to this country. We settled in Wyandotte and lived there until we moved to Commerce sixteen years ago. My father, Eldridge Brown, was the chief of the Wyandottes at the time of his death, about twenty years ago. He spoke

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four languages besides English-- Wyandotte, Seneca, Shawnee and Quapaw. Mother passed on ten years ago and I am not very well versed in the history of my people as I have spent most of my girlhood days in school where I had no occasion to hear the events discussed.