

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH. INTERVIEW 8216

258

- 0 -

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

259

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH.

INTERVIEW:

8216.

Field Worker's name Mildred B. McFarlandThis report made on (date) August 13. 19371. Name Mrs. Phamie Elizabeth Sheldon2. Post Office Address Edmond.3. Residence address (or location) 327 E. 2nd.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 3 Year 18775. Place of birth Lacyne, Kansas.6. Name of Father P. Commodore Jones Place of birth West VirginiaOther information about father 18527. Name of Mother Amanda Jones Place of birth MissouriOther information about mother 1855

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 7.

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH. INTERVIEW. 8216.

Mildred B. McFarland,
Field Worker.
August 13, 1937.

Interview with Phamie Elizabeth Sheldon,
Edmond, Oklahoma.
Born June 3, 1877.
Father-Commodore P. Jones
Mother-Amanda Jones

My father, Commodore P. Jones, made the run of 1889 on horseback; we lived in Kansas at the time. He went around by way of Purcell and came in from the south. He traveled quite a distance and finally placed his flag two miles east and three miles south of Edmond. My mother, Mrs. Amanda Jones, still owns the homestead. He borrowed a plough and turned up a few furrows and made a little shack of tree limbs and brush. In about a month he went back to Kansas to get his family ready to move to their new home.

My sister, Luella Jane, was a tiny baby, and I was about twelve years old. My father loaded a covered wagon with bedding, a cook stove, farming implements and enough provisions to last about a month. He also took five cows, seven head of horses and a few chickens.

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH.

INTERVIEW. 8218.

- 2 -

There were no roads except the cow trails and ridge roads. We traveled over the cow trails across the prairie. When we started to cross in the quicksand, we were all slowly sinking when my father caught sight of a wagon drawn by two yoke of oxen. He called to the man for help and we were finally pulled out in about three hours. The most outstanding feature that I remember on my first sight of Oklahoma was the beautiful flowers; the prairie was covered with them.

After we arrived we lived in a tent until father could build a house. It was a two-room affair; one room of unfinished lumber and the other one of logs. He made a table and chairs, a three cornered dish cupboard and a safe for our food. Our beds were made bunk fashion, two on each side of the room. We gathered dry grass and leaves and made mattresses for them. Mother had several sheets and she took some of these and made curtains for the windows and a table cover to

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH.

INTERVIEW. 8216.

- 3 -

hide the rough boards of the table. There was a spring of cold, clear water not far from the house. We would hang our milk and butter in tin buckets in the spring to keep it cool.

There was a buffalo trail on our place and I think faint traces of it are still there. There were quite a few deer, wild turkeys, coons, opossums, quail and rabbits; we never lacked for fresh meat. There were plenty of snakes and centipedes, too.

Father planted a lot of grain and a lovely garden. Several months after we were settled all of our chickens, cows and six horses died. It was believed they contracted what they called "Texas Fever" or that they ate a poison weed. It was quite a blow to my parents. After that and before we could buy another cow, we lived on turnips and beans.

The Kickapoo reservation was not so far away and quite often a band of these Indians would ride through our place. They were always quite friendly. The squaws would have their papooses strapped to their backs or

S.
SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH.

INTERVIEW.

8216.

- 4 -

across the pony in front of them. They wore bright colored blankets and they all wore moccasins on their feet.

After a time the people would gather at each other's homes and hold religious meetings. They decided to organize a subscription school. Mr. W. A. L. Hoff was the first teacher in our neighborhood to teach in the subscription school. Camp meetings were quite common. The neighbors would gather together and build a shelter of tree branches and brush. They would send out word of the meeting and people would come from far and near. They would come in wagons, on horseback and in buggies, bringing provisions to last several days. There would be a preacher of every denomination there. Each day they would take their turn, preaching the Gospel.

father was very much opposed to mixed schools. He would organize a Neighborhood caucus on determining the settlement of mixed schools. In 1891 the county was divided into districts. There was a school on every

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH. INTERVIEW. 8216.

- 5 -

three-mile corner. The neighbors would hold their literaries, quilting and spelling bees there. Every fall they had a husking bee at different homes. The school house was used as a church, too, until a church could be built.

I was still quite small, but I remember very vividly the day Carrie Nation came to Edmond. It was a gloomy day for the saloon-keeper. She wrecked the saloons and chopped up the tables and chairs, threw her hatchet through the mirrors and windows. Then she proceeded to break bottles of whiskey and wine. She rolled barrels and kegs of it to the sidewalk and chopped holes in them to let the contents flow down the street.

The communities started having agricultural fairs in 1890 and have continued them each year since.

Politics played quite a part in the early days. At that time the Governor was appointed by the United States President until Oklahoma was declared a state.

When I was sixteen year old I was married to Mr. Sheldon. He had made the run in the Cherokee Strip

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH. INTERVIEW. 8216.

- 6 -

and staked his claim about two miles northeast of what is now Billings. We had to start from the ground up. I felt quite experienced, though, from having gone through it all before. We made a dugout for our first home. All our furniture was handmade except our stove. A short time later we bought lumber and built a one room house and lean-to kitchen. We had many hardships and the first winter we ate just what we could find in the way of fish and wild game. There were quite a few wild plums and berries.

There was a trading-post and post office called Whiterock where we did our trading. It is located about two and a half miles northeast of Billings. All the supplies were freighted there in wagons from Perry.

When the railroad was laid Whiterock was missed so it was moved to the present site of Billings. There may be a few buildings left. The name was changed from Whiterock to Billings.

We lived there about four years, then sold out and bought a farm six miles southeast of Edmond and lived

SHELDON, PHAMIE ELIZABETH

INTERVIEW. 8216.

- 7 -

there five years. In the meantime, the Caddo country had been opened for settlement. We bought a relinquishment there. but found there was no water on the place so we had to have a well put down. They drilled twenty holes but still found no water. We moved back to Edmond and have lived here for thirty-three years. I have always thought of my father as a very brave and courageous man to battle the many hardships he met in the early pioneer days.