

SULLIVAN, ELIZA J.

INTERVIEW

#4651

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

1580

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Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) June 29 1937

1. Name Eliza J. Sullivan

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Route 3, Box 5

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 6 Year 1870

5. Place of birth Illinois, Wayne County.

6. Name of Father E. W. Bullard Place of birth Illinois

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Lina Bullard Place of birth Illinois

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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Ethel Mae Yates
Interviewer
June 29, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Eliza J. Sullivan
Elk City, Oklahoma.

My father and mother were married in Illinois in the year 1858 and moved to Texas when I was seven years old and settled on a farm near Fort Worth.

I was married to Mr. D. D. Sullivan in the year 1888, and we lived in Texas until 1897. Then we moved to the Indian Territory. We were on the road seven days; camped out at night and made our beds down on the ground and cooked on camp fires. We crossed Red River by ford at Nocona and settled on a little farm near Pauls Valley. Our post-office was at Elmore and we lived in a little log house and rented our place from a Mr. Reins.

Mr. Reins was a white man who ^{had} had a Choctaw Indian wife but had accidentally killed her the year before.

The neighbors said that one stormy night a boy had come to Mr. and Mrs. Reins' dugout to seek shelter and was hanging onto the door. Mr. and Mrs. Reins would ask him what he wanted but he was deaf and dumb so they received no answer, so they just supposed that he was a burglar.

Mr. Reins got the gun and told his wife to stand still

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but she slipped over to the window and pulled the shade down and when she did that Mr. Reins thought burglars were breaking in and shot her.

There were not many white people in the Chickasaw Nation then. The land was mostly all owned by the Indians, and the whites came in and took horses from the Indian Agents.

Our school house was a dugout but our children did not go to school there as they were too small.

The farms were very small and people farmed mostly with Georgia stock plows with one horse. This was a good farming country with free range, lots of wild fruit such as plums, grapes and berries, pecans, black walnuts and hickory nuts but it was so sickly that we just couldn't live there. Most of the settlers in that neighborhood had chills or malarial fever.

My father had come west near Harmon so my husband put me and the children on the train and sent us to my father who met us at Weatherford which was the nearest railroad town and my husband came through in a wagon. This was in the year 1897.

Mr. Sullivan filed on a homestead in Roger Mills County, near Harmon which was a very small place at that time. It had a few dwelling houses and two stores; one of them was owned by Mr. Sisson who lives in Elk City now. Our first home in the west was a sod house, and this was the way it was built. They would take planks and stand them up and plow sod with the grass in it and they would take this and stack it against the plank for walls and take poles and put on top and cover them with sod for the roof. I was always scared when it started raining as I was afraid the dugout would fall in on us.

A little later the neighbors got busy and helped us build a dugout which we dug down in the ground and made three logs high.

The first school my oldest boy went to was in a little box school house that was called the Iowa school house and is still standing. We lived on what was called Dry Creek, back one and one half miles from the Washita River close to the Cheyenne Indians.

The Government would give the Indians blankets, cooking utensils and clothing and they would bring them

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over and trade them to the white people for chickens, vegetables, pork and beef, but they liked beef best. If a cow got in the bog and died the Indians were right there to get it. Nothing went to waste around the Indians, whether it was killed or died of disease.

There was some kind of a row and some way the cowboys shot an Indian's wife and this Indian came to my brother's house. My brother's name was Jack Bullard and he was deputy sheriff at that time. The Indian whose wife had been killed came to get my brother to arrest the boys but Jack had gone to Cheyenne, so this Indian went on and swore out papers for the boys and they arrested all but one and he got away. The boys who were caught swore that the one who got away was the one who had shot the Indian woman.

Later my brother was elected sheriff of that county. There were some men who had come in on Dead Indian Creek with a herd of horses. My brother not knowing that the horses had been stolen thought that he and the deputy would ride over and see what the men were doing. These men with the stolen horses were outlaws and thought Jack and the

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deputy sheriff were after them and shot and killed my brother and the deputy, too, and then made their getaway. The names of these outlaws were Sam Green and Pete White-breed.

I am the mother of ten children and all of them were raised in the Indian Territory and Oklahoma, and were all born here but four. I surely went through some trying times in the pioneer days.