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ALLARD, LYMAN

INTERVIEW

#9010

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

ALLARD, LYMAN INTERVIEW 9010

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin,

This report made on (date) October 27 193 7

1. Name Mr. Lyman Allard,

Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

2. Residence address (or location) 407 West Wade Street

3. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 4 Year 1859

4. Place of birth Henry County, Illinois

Name of Father Daniel Allard, Place of birth Ohio, Oct. 22

1821

Other information about father Died August 1, 1882

Name of Mother Susanna Swope Allard, Place of birth Ohio, Oct.

1823

Other information about mother Died Oct. 13, 1870

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 14.

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Nora Lorrin,
Investigator,
October 27, 1937.

An Interview with Mr. Lyman Allard ,
407 West Wade Street, El Reno, Okla.

Mr. Lyman Allard was born in Henry County,
Illinois, April 4, 1859, on a farm.

His father, Daniel Allard, was born in Ohio,
October 22, 1821, and died August 1, 1882.

His mother, Susanna Swope Allard, was born in
Ohio, October 4, 1823, and died October 13, 1870.

Mr. Allard's parents were married February
16, 1842. There were seven boys and three girls in
the first family and after the mother's death his
father married again and one child, a boy, was born
of the second marriage.

His parents lived in Henry County, Illinois,
until Mr. Allard was sixteen years of age. His father
then held a sale, selling everything including the
farm and they moved to Jackson County, Kansas, buying
a farm three miles north of Circleville. Circleville
was just a small place and was their nearest trading
point.

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They moved to the place in 1875, the year before the grasshoppers took everything. Lyman Allard married Miss Mildred McComas in 1880 and there were three children born to them before they came to Oklahoma.

There was an Indian Reservation about ten or twelve miles from his father's farm in Jackson County, Kansas. These Indians were either Otoes or Pottawatomies. One of his friends named Joe Murray, married a daughter of one of the richest men in the tribe.

Mr. Allard and his wife lived in Jackson County, Kansas, until they came to Oklahoma. When the land was opened up in Oklahoma in 1889 they were living in Circleville. He and three of his friends, Robert Fry, Mike Godfrey and Henry Rouseville, planned to come to the opening together. They were all going together in a spring wagon. After they got everything together and the other men drove up to Mr. Allard's house to get him, his wife, who was high strung and intuitive, threw her arms about his neck and refused flatly to let him come with them. She was afraid that he would be killed. Lots of the men who came to the run were killed.

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Mr. Allard told his friends that he hated to go back on them as he wanted to go and intended to go sooner or later but in deference to his wife's feelings he had decided to wait. They conferred and then told him that it would be all right as if they insisted on his going with them and something should happen to him Mrs. Allard would always blame them for it.

Later in August after the run and after other people had gotten their claims, including his three friends, Mrs. Allard felt better about it and was willing for him to come. Mr. Allard and Mr. Harry Hill came down together, on the train, as far as Pond Creek and took the stage coach from there to Kingfisher. He saw his first cowboys at Pond Creek and he said "They sure looked wild to me with their broad brimmed hats, high heeled boots and long spurs. There were about twenty of them and I did not know whether I wanted to stop there or not. When I got acquainted with them I found them as nice and friendly as could be."

In Kingfisher they went to a locator and he brought them to El Reno at \$10.00 apiece. They were

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given some numbers and taken to some claims that were about four miles southeast of El Reno.

He went to Kingfisher and filed on the numbers which the locator had given him without verifying them and when he came down in December to locate on his claim found that he had filed on a claim that was twelve miles southeast of El Reno instead of on the claim that the crooked locator had taken them to see. He did not know it until he went out to the first claim and found a man on it living in a dugout. Mr. Allard told this man that he believed he was on the wrong place and asked him what the numbers were. The man said he did not think that he was making a mistake and told Mr. Allard what the numbers of the place really were, and then Mr. Allard knew that his locator had played him a scurvy trick.

Mr. Allard and his family came overland in a covered wagon in the latter part of December, 1889. His wife had an uncle who was running a sawmill half-way between their farm and Oklahoma City. It was

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located on the Canadian River at Dead Man's Crossing. A man was shot and killed during the run and he was buried at the crossing. That is how the crossing got its name. Two men had staked the same claim and they got to quarrelling and one of them was shot to death.

Mrs. Allard's uncle furnished them with enough native cottonwood lumber to build a shack 14' x 18'. They got the shingles on time at a lumber yard in Frisco. When Mr. Allard first came down to file on his claim there had been plenty of grass but while he was gone to Kansas after his family, someone started a prairie fire and when he came the second time the country round about for miles was nothing but a blackened desolation.

There were no trees in that vicinity. There were a few dugouts or as he called them "holes in the ground" around the neighborhood.

Mr. Allard was a stock contractor. He built a small stable ^{and} fixed a little pasture with posts and wire for his team. Later, a bunch came down from Jackson

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County Kansas; among them his brother-in-law who brought him a cow and some chickens. He worked whenever he could get anything to do. If he could get a day's job for a neighbor he always took it and kept improving his place little by little.

The Allard family broke the sod in the spring of 1890 and planted wheat in the fall and the next year the wheat came up fine and he had hopes of harvesting forty bushels of wheat to the acre. On Sunday of May 17, 1892, they had gone to three o'clock Sunday School and as they were coming home, a very bad looking storm came up from the northwest.

It hailed over a strip two miles wide, Mr. Allard does not know how long the hail fell. His wheat was hauled on until there was not a stem of it left. The corn was only stubs but it came out enough so that it produced seven or eight bushels of corn to the acre and Mr. Allard had ten or twelve acres of it.

He had, before the hail, eighteen or twenty acres of wheat and eight or ten acres of oats. He said if it

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had not been for the help of an uncle and his father-in-law he does not know what they would have done.

They had a terrible time getting water that was fit to drink. They dug three wells, two of them having gyp water, then by going into a draw about a quarter of a mile from the house, in a well about ten or twelve feet deep, they got good water but it necessitated their hauling it even though it was on their own place.

There was not a stick of wood on their claim that could be used for fuel and at first they got their wood on the Canadian River, cottonwood mostly. Then they got a little wood from Council Grove and later still, six or seven men would get together and with their teams would go to the Caddo country and get wood there. They would go and get loaded up on the first day and come home the next, usually consuming two days on the trip. He and some of his neighbors were arrested by a United States deputy marshal when they were out in the Caddo country getting wood one time.

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Some of the men had cut some green wood and had put a lot of it on their wagons, which was against the law at that time. There were seven or eight of the wagons. Mr. Allard had been within the law, however, as he had no green wood on his wagon. The marshal told them to report to his office in El Reno the next day, which they all did, expecting to be fined. Mr. Allard said that there were no more than one or two of them who could have paid a fine had they been required to do so. The marshal did not fine them but he did give them a good talking to and then released them.

He told them to "leave the green stuff alone and to stay out of the Caddo country." Mr. Allard is not certain just who that marshal was but believes that it might have been Cris Madsen. He knew Chris Madsen but does not remember whether it was he that time or not.

There was a little store called "Liberty" about five miles southwest of their claim and they traded there a few times but did most of their trading at "Frisco," a small town north of the present city of Yukon (across

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the river north). Press Cannon's father ran a store and post office in Frisco in the early days.

The Government was sending rations to the people who were needy during the summer of 1892; beans, bacon, corn meal, etc. It was being distributed in Frisco. Mr. Allard and his family were in pretty hard circumstances after they were hauled out. He went to the place where they were distributing the provisions and there was almost a quarter of a mile of people lined up ahead of him. He had to get in line at the end and it was hot and he was tired, discouraged and sweaty; he stood it awhile and then got to thinking how awful it was, for a man who had always been honest and had worked hard, to be brought to such a pass that he had to accept charity.

Some of his neighbors were in line near him and he told them that he could not stand it, that he was going to town and see if he could not get credit some place. They tried to argue him out of it for they had all tried it and failed, and most of them were older and more

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experienced than he was. They told him that hundreds had tried it and failed. But he decided to try it anyway and left them with the tears running down his face.

When he got up town he went to a groceryman and explained his circumstances and told the man that he just had to have some food, that he had a family and nothing with which to feed them, and that he would pay for the food with the first money that he earned. The groceryman told him that there were so many people in the same condition that he was not able to carry them.

He let Mr. Allard have a small bill of groceries, however. Mr. Allard said that he did not ask for much but that he got what he asked for. The men who had tried to persuade him not to try to get credit came along and saw him take his provisions home and wondered about it. A neighbor named White had about thirty acres of ground he wanted to have broken and Mr. Allard asked for the job and got it. His team was so poor from lack of food that Mr. White did not think they could

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stand the work and so Mr. White loaned him one of his own big, fat horses to help, not charging him anything for the use of the horse nor for his meals. Mr. Allard took the money he got for the work and paid his grocery bill and made another small one and this ~~grocery~~ man proved a friend who helped him over the rough places, for after that, he could always count on getting groceries at this man's store if he did or did not have the money to pay down. Later, they came to El Reno to do their trading and they would come about every two weeks to sell their butter, eggs and other produce.

There was not much game but in the fall, wild geese and brant would settle on the wheat sometimes and Mr. Allard has seen as many as a hundred geese in a flock in a wheat field eating the wheat.

Mr. and Mrs. Allard's children went to a party one night and three children at the party had the smallpox. It spread all over the neighborhood, but there were no deaths as it was in a light form.

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There were lots of snakes; bull snakes and rattlers.

Mr. Allard found one rattlesnake den when he was coming home from El Reno one time. He saw something glistening and he discovered that a ball of about twenty rattlesnakes were fighting. He went on to Mr. White's place, got him and his boys, their pitch forks and some clubs, and came back to kill the snakes. They killed some of the snakes but most of them got away and Mr. Allard said that they gave off a peculiarly nauseous odor.

Another time Shell Creek was up and the water touched the bridge. Mr. Allard came to the bridge and about twenty water moccasins lay sunning themselves on the bridge. When they heard him coming they slithered off the bridge into the water.

There were times when they were troubled a lot with chinch bugs and other pests. Coyotes were rather pestiferous.

There were all nationalities in this locality and both Northern and Southern dialects

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were spoken. Many of the Southern people said "you all" and would "tote" a load instead of carrying it and many young men would "carry" their girls to parties.

The Allard family lived on this farm for fifteen years doing general farming, raising wheat and oats. They planted an orchard of five or six acres but it was an upland farm and there was gumbo underneath the top soil and the trees would grow nicely for awhile and then when they struck the gumbo they would die.

Three children were born to them after they came to Oklahoma making six in all. They got the children a two wheeled cart to ride about in and a pony to pull it.

They moved to another farm six miles south of Yukon. West point was their church and it was just across the road on the corner. They lived on that farm until two years after his wife died in 1921. It was too lonely for Mr. Allard out there without his wife and he moved to El Reno. On the second place he had Shorthorn cattle, horses and mules and got so he was doing well. There

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was a good eight room frame house there and the best barn in the country. The place was well improved when he bought it and the land was creek bottom, much better than the upland farm he had been farming.

Mr. Allard and Mrs. Frances Custard were married in 1930 and live at 407 West Wade Street, El Reno, and have a very nice home.