**JOHNSON, ARTHUR (MRS.).** BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

**Field Worker's Name:** Merrill A. Nelson

**This report made on (date):** September 15, 1937

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Name:</strong></td>
<td>Mrs. Arthur Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Post Office Address:</strong></td>
<td>361 East Cherry Street, Enid, Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Residence address (or location):</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>DATE OF BIRTH:</strong></td>
<td>Month: April, Day: 1, Year: 1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. <strong>Place of birth:</strong></td>
<td>Western Kansas, possibly near Medicine Lodge, Kansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. <strong>Name of Father:</strong></td>
<td>John H. Maxfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of birth:</strong></td>
<td>Rockingham County, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Justice of Peace:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other information about father:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. <strong>Name of Mother:</strong></td>
<td>Margaret Lindsay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Place of birth:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other information about mother:</strong></td>
<td>A nurse.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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:** 10
Interview with Mrs. Arthur Johnson
361 East Cherry Street,
Enid, Oklahoma

Interviewer - Merrill A. Nelson
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
September 15, 1937

My father was a school teacher. He also engaged in business as a grower of garden vegetables.

My mother was a practical nurse. Her mother died when she was young, and a doctor took her to his home and trained her for this work.

My parents lived in Ohio for a while. My oldest brother remained there when we went farther west. I was the only girl and there were seven brothers. When I was a child I often wished I had a sister for a playmate.

I was born in Western Kansas where my parents came and pioneered in a dugout. When I was only two months old my parents came to old Oklahoma, in 1889, to homestead. I am not sure whether or not they made the run into old Oklahoma. They may have come a little later. At any rate they were among the very early settlers there.
Mr. Beeman, a neighbor, guided us into the territory. The party consisted of this man, my seven brothers, my parents, and myself. We brought with us some stock, four horses, and a pet fawn belonging to Mr. Beeman; we came in a covered wagon. I was only two months old when we reached our place which was a southwest quarter of a section, two and one-half miles north and three west of Dover, near Prairie View School. We slept in a tent for a while. One night a storm came up and though four of my brothers tried to hold the tent it blew away and everything we had was ruined.

We then went to the neighbors to live while the men built a log house, which was placed in or near the center of our homestead, off from the main road. The old house had a sod roof and consisted of three rooms. One of the rooms was just a lean-to. Our neighbors to the north were the Wilcox family and to the east was Mr. Wiley Beeman, the man who had brought us from Kansas.
As a child I remember the wild life around this log home. One day a spreading adder was killed near the house. His head seemed a foot wide to me. This made a vivid impression on my mind as a child. One day going through the woods I saw a snake. The scientists may say that there is no such thing as a hoop snake but believe it or not this one rolled toward me. Other animals in the neighborhood were coyotes of which there were many and wild turkeys, one of which my father shot through the window.

Occasionally Indians would come through. I was just a small child but I was not afraid. They treated us very kindly and though Mother and I were sometimes by ourselves they never attempted to harm us. Once an Indian party stopped and asked for water but they never tried to come inside our house.

My father used to carry a bucket of eggs eleven miles to town and back. He would walk to Hennessey nine miles away and return with a sack of flour on his shoulder. Mother always had a flock of chickens on the place. Father raised a lot of watermelons and other fruit.
As my mother had been trained in a doctor’s family, she was called on far and wide to assist in all kinds of sickness, including typhoid and confinement cases. There was a lot of sickness in the early days and few doctors available so she had much to do along this line, night and day, Summer and Winter.

My parents were poor. Sometimes all we had to eat was milk gravy and bread. We even ate kaffir corn at times as did many other settlers.

My father started farming with a young pair of oxen. I have a picture of this team. He hitched them up with bits in their mouths instead of yokes and they had a chain harness.

West of us were colored people. We were situated between their school and the white school. Father was clerk or school official for both schools. Once in a while he would take me to the colored graduation exercises. He was also Justice of the Peace. They would have trials at our home. They would also come to our house for school warrants.
The Murphys had a sorghum mill. I remember skimming off the sorghum. We raised corn and cotton ourselves.

There were about twenty-five to thirty pupils in the school where I attended. At graduation I was valedictorian of my class. Our teachers were often men. The school was usually well managed and we had a good building for those times, equal to some of the country schools of today.

The road from our house to the school was in a depression or valley. One time the snow filled this up. It was really over my head. I walked on top of the drift. My brothers were careful to help me down this road as it was dangerous for me. We were regular in our attendance at the school.

Talk about dust storms! We were near the river sand at Dover and sand storms that have swept over the country recently are no worse than what we experienced then. I have seen the dust or sand drifting like snow around the fences, along the road. I do not remember it sifting through the air as it sometimes does now, however.
About a half mile west of Hennessey and two miles south was an outlaw hangout. And another was on the place of "Link" Barr. These outlaws may have had something to do with the Dover train robbery. This was a Turkey Creek gang. The place changed hands often before Mr. Murphy got it. Father had planted a peach and cherry and apple orchard down by the road. He was very proud of it.

One time a neighbor came up to the house. "You haven't a fruit tree to your name," he exclaimed. "I don't believe it," said Father. He went down there where we were thinking of building and where the orchard was located. Some one had dug up every tree. This was about the time of the opening of the Cherokee Strip and it was our opinion that some one on their way up to this country had taken the trees with him but we never had any clue as to who did it.

My father took me to the opening of the Cherokee Strip a few miles north of Hennessey. We saw the trains going into the Strip. They were loaded to the tops. When the people got inside of the Strip it seemed
as if those on top just fell off almost in a body.

Two of my brothers were at the drawing of the Wichita-Caddo Indians in 1901, (near Fort Sill). One of them drew a homestead and the other married a girl who had drawn a number. All the rest of my brothers secured homesteads also but not in the United States. They went to Western Canada. Stanley secured a place in Alberta, Canada; the others in Saskatchewan. They took pre-emption. They live there now.

Mr. Thorpe, our neighbor, brought us up in his rig north of Hennessey to see the Cherokee Strip run. We thought, in those days, it was a very long ride from the west of Dover to north of Hennessey. The railroad cars were cattle cars and heavily loaded with people who were about to make the run. We were in a two seated wagon with no top over us. We watched those that went into the strip on the train and also many who drove in in other conveyances, or on horseback.

When we came into the territory we had practically no stock. Mr. Beam who brought us in had a team of mules. The first stock I remember my parents having
was the team of steers I mentioned. Our food was sometimes salt pork.

When I grew older I attended the Harmony Sunday School. This was two miles north in the neighborhood of the Murphys. Mr. Murphy was active in church work. I do not know whether or not he was an elder. I am quite sure he was a school director at any rate. The old gentleman is still living but he must be ninety years old or over. He is living with his son, Robert, in Hennessey.

Our school district was District #39, in Kingfisher County. I have an early picture of this school and a later one taken October 25, 1903.

One of my brothers captured a fawn but Mr. Beeman cared for it and brought it from Kansas and claimed it. How I enjoyed playing with this young deer. As a girl I also loved to go daisy hunting.

I do not think there were any wolves in our section, at least as far as I can remember, but my parents had seen a few when they first came, I think. There were also plenty of hawks and I guess there still are in that section.
When I was fourteen years old I went to the Kingfisher high school for two years. Then, without finishing, I attended the Capitol City Business School. After three months there I came to the law firm of Robinson and Kern, in 1896, in Enid. The large Stevenson building was not even built, our firm being among the first in that building. I worked for them a while but now I am employed in the office of the County Judge.

I was married to Arthur Johnson, in 1909. In our home over the fireplace there is a picture in tile of the old pioneers coming into the country in covered wagons. My husband operates a small grocery in the back of our home.