

FAR, UHARSON, A. O.

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

FARQUHARSON, A. O.

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Field Worker's name Ruth E. Moon

This report made on (date) October 28

1937

1. Name A. O. Farquharson

2. Post Office Address Guthrie, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 210 E. Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 18 Year 1855

5. Place of birth Toronto, Canada

James Farquharson's birth place still belongs to Farquharsons.

6. Name of Father James Farquharson Place of birth Aberdeen, Scotland

Other information about father Shoe merchant & lecturer

7. Name of Mother Mary Lutterbaugh Place of birth Toronto, Canada

Other information about mother born on 200 Acre farm her mother took from Canadian Government--still in family.

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 15.

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An interview with A. O. Farquharson,  
210 $\frac{1}{2}$  E. Oklahoma, Guthrie, Oklahoma.

I left Oxford, Kansas, April 22, 1889. It was late when I started as I did not expect to take any part in the run, I only wanted to see the fun. Then I expected to go back home and stay there.

The train I was on stopped at a little station five miles north of Guthrie called Lawrie.

Knowing that it would be hard to find a place in Guthrie to sleep or get anything to eat, I left the train to try to find the camp of my brothers who had come on an earlier train expecting to settle near Skeleton Creek. After much wandering around I finally spied their camp at a distance. I got there in time to partake of the pork and beans which smelled so good from the pot in which they were boiling.

My brother, William, had located a fine bottom farm on Skeleton Creek, but my brother, James, had not yet been fortunate enough to get a claim.

We all slept well and soundly that night.

Next morning we looked around. I found one or two fellows threatening to file a contest on my brother's claim. They had a negro named Poteet who said he could swear that

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he saw my brother there before twelve O'clock. This negro got to be quite a politician in Guthrie afterwards. For fear they might give trouble, I took a team and plow and made a good and valid settlement on that for myself.

Afterwards a man by the name of Lutze filed a contest against my brother. But when he found that I had a valid claim ahead of him, we agreed on a price and I settled with him, then paid my brother for his interest.

I then built a house and dug a good well, and broke out eighty acres of sod.

My wife and two boys were still hanging onto the Kansas home although they had spent several months in the summer with me on the claim.

I had filed on the claim, and was getting ready to take out a deed, sow a crop of wheat and move my family down, when a Mr. Remington came by one day looking for a farm. We were not long in making a deal. He paid me \$1,200.00 cash, which was considered a good price at that time for a claim, and I moved to Guthrie.

On the morning after the opening, we had started out to find a claim for my brother, James. We found an Irish-

man with a splendid claim, most of it bottom land, joining up to Lawrie. He was a genuine hobo, couldn't tell a good farm from a rock quarry; but he persisted that Lawrie was going to be the town of Oklahoma. He told us that the bottom had dropped out of Guthrie for the Santa Fe had established Lawrie for the big town. Of course his argument persuaded us and we paid him \$175.00 for the claim. He was asking \$500.00.

My brother, J. A. Farquharson, still owns and lives on this farm, which has been made famous by its fine apples. He took first prize on his apples at the National Apple Show at Spokane in 1911.

Soon after I moved to Guthrie, I went into partnership with Mac Morris. We bought the New York Hardware Store from George W. Lundy, who had started it on April 22nd. We took possession on January 1, 1891. It was then located between where the City Hall now is and the Santa Fe Railroad on the slope of the hill.

We had hard sledding for the first six months. Then the Sac and Fox Country was going to be opened up, and business began right. For three months before the opening every train brought loads of new-comers. We were the nearest hardware store to the

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depot, and we had a good chance to catch the first trade as they got off the trains.

We never closed the store before eleven p.m. for we could do business whenever a trail came in. They all wanted hoes, rakes, spades, shovels, pitch-forks, hammers, nails, dish-pans, wash-pans, frying pans, and dutch ovens.

We had had the store open almost day and night and were tired out by the day of the opening. We concluded that the trains would not be crowded with people wanting goods that night for the "run" was already over. So we closed the store earlier than usual, and went home to get a good night's rest. We left a young man sleeping there for our store had been robbed twice.

My wife came home from Kansas that night. The trail should have been in at 10 p.m., but on account of heavy traffic it did not get in until 1 a.m. My wife came home in a hack, and awakened me. She said that I would have to get up and hurry down to the store as people had made the young man open up the store and it was full of people who had just arrived on the train and wanted to buy things. I hurried down, and got busy. All we had to do was find the things they wanted quickly. They didn't argue about the prices. By the time we had them all waited

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on the cocks were crowing for day. Some had wagons, some were on horseback, and some were on foot.

Besides other hardware supplies we sold thirty-five new cook stoves one morning before nine o'clock, just after the Sac and Fox Opening.

At first the only house that I could get to live in was a little two-room house up near where our high school is now. It was made out of a store building. We lived in it three months before I could find anything better.

When we closed the store at 10:30 or 11:00 P.M., I always had to put on my rubber boots to go home because the mud was so deep. There were no sidewalks except where some enterprising citizen laid down a few boards.

We made a little money and we had a good time.

On the corner where the Dolph Printing Company is now, was an old wooden building, a saloon, with a rooming-house upstairs. A stairway went up the outside on the south side. It was pleasant there in the afternoons so a bunch of loafers used to sit on the steps. The woman who ran the rooming house decided that they were hurting her business and asked them to move several times. Then she had a carpenter build a water trough on the banister directed in such a way that when

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the water left the trough if it would land on the necks of the trespassers. The next time there was a full quorum on the stairs she emptied a bucket of cold water into the trough. The surprised men almost jumped to the middle of the street and yelled like Comanche Indians.

We soon got better acquainted with our neighbors, my wife began to attend social events, joined a few clubs, and was satisfied with the life.

The children went to school in the old cracker factory, 200 block East Vilas, with Miss Alma Carson as teacher.

I bought some lots at 519 E. Harrison and built a residence there.

Mr. . . . Cooper, a neighbor, asked me one morning if he could present my name to the city council to fill a vacancy. When I took my seat, Mayor Martin appointed me on the finance committee. I was elected on the council the next term, and served two years as chairman of the finance committee with J. F. Cooper and H. L. Todd. We put the city on a cash basis by refunding the present indebtedness. That made our warrants worth 100 cents on the dollar, when they had been selling for 65 cents.



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The next city election, April 1896, I was elected Mayor without any opposition, being nominated by the republican convention and endorsed by the Democratic convention. I was more proud of that than of just being Mayor.

In 1909 I was again elected Mayor, we had a busy term, as we put down nearly all the paving that the city has up to the present date.

We started an agitation for a viaduct across the Santa Fe tracks. When we went out of office we had a promise from the Santa Fe Company in writing that they would build it if the city would grant some small concessions. Through inattention it was dropped for many years and has just lately been built.

I served for seven years on the school board, three years of that time as president of the board. I resigned because I could not do it justice without neglecting my private business.

We were all very busy looking after the legislature which met here. We were hard pressed to find rooms for them to meet in. We voted bonds and built what we called a Convention Hall on a ten acre plot on the east side of town, which was intended as a site for a capitol building at a later date.

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When we got statehood and Haswell, a Democrat, was elected, governor, he and Frank Greer, who published the Guthrie Capital, had a lot of trouble over politics. Finally, we lost the capital to Oklahoma City.

You have heard about Bill Doolin, the bank robber, but did you know that he held a big reception in the Logan County Courthouse when he was brought here from the eastern part of the territory? Some U. S. Marshals brought him in, and the word got out through the town. Ever body wanted to see him, so they flocked to the courthouse and lined up. I left my store and went with the crowd.

We stood in line for quite awhile, finally I reached him. He was standing in the hall. I shook hands with him, and told him I was glad to see him.

"Yes," he said, "I am glad to be back here where I can see all the boys."

A short time after that my wife and I had taken a little drive through West Guthrie. As we were driving up Noble Avenue hill from the bridge, we noticed people nodding out of sight. Then we heard yells and calls for help coming from the United States Jail. The noise kept getting worse so I

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stopped my horses and told my wife that I was going over to see what was wrong. She did not want me to go for fear I would get into trouble. I ran over and found about a half dozen guards locked up in the cell. The prisoners had got away and taken the keys with them. One guard, who was out in the city, had a set of duplicates with him. They asked me to find him. I found him in a protracted meeting that was being held in a tent near the courthouse site by a preacher named Abe Mulcky.

The guard soon got the men out of the cell, but no trace of the escaped prisoners could be found that night. One or two were captured the next day but about fifteen got clear away.

Bill Doolin and the man who was with him took a horse and buggy from a young one-armed man by the name of Coontz; who was out riding with his girl, leaving them to walk back to town.

The next time Bill Doolin was captured and brought back to town he did not hold any reception. They took him out to Summit View Cemetery and left him there. He had been watched at his home where he had gone to see his wife and child, and

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was killed in a few minutes after he had bidden them good-bye.

Guthrie is now the headquarters for Masonry in this state. We have two Masonic homes here, one for the old folks over sixty-five years of age and one for the children up to eighteen years of age. We also have two blue lodges, and the Consistory which has a membership scattered all over the world. It has had as high as 17,000 paid up members. We also have in the York Rite the Chapter and Commandery. And a very large membership of Eastern Stars.

When the late General Harper S. Cunningham was empowered by the Supreme Council at Washington, D. C. to establish a Consistory somewhere in the territory of Oklahoma, he made the announcement one evening before a large gathering of business men that he was ready to form a Consistory and would like to meet all those interested at his office on Wednesday of the next week. It seems that only eight persons were interested as that was the number that attended.

Harper S. Cunningham was much disappointed and said that he could go to some other city and get plenty of help. But Guthrie was his home and he wanted it here, and if we boys would join him and help, the rest would see some day what

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they were trying to turn down.

I have remembered his remarks often of late years, when we have taken in as many as 800 in one class. Very few of the early workers in the consistery had any chance to join a class. Most of us had the degrees communicated. When we formed classes for others to join we had no building to hold our meetings in, and no money to build with. Four or five of us got together and borrowed \$1,100.00 to buy the lots on which the Masonic Temple was later built. This property was turned over free of charge to the Grand Lodge of the State to induce them to make this state headquarters and to locate the two homes here.

It should be remembered that the commencement without a dollar in sight and going \$1,100.00 in debt to buy lots, and then working up the membership until we were able to build the first Temple, and enlarge it twice to hold the increasing membership was really a more wonderful and heroic undertaking than it was for the later members to build what we call the Cathedral. They had a million and <sup>a</sup>half dollars in the treasury to start with, and a building that had cost \$150,000.00 on ten acres of ground all given to them free of charge.

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Of course we are all proud of the great Masonic work that has been done in Guthrie. I have had the pleasure and honor of being a 33rd degree Mason for more than thirty years.

I would like to have recorded the names of a few heroic and courageous souls who were instrumental in starting and pushing to completion the work of Masonry in Guthrie and the state. They are Fred Ehler of Hennessey, James Antrobous of Fairview, William Griffin of Oklahoma City, L. S. Donby of Dallas and George Willis of Oklahoma City, and a few others.

Knowlton originated Danderine while running a barber shop here in Guthrie, and made a fortune out of it. Now he lives in Los Angeles.

Just before the Strip opening I bought a big English coach horse, a trotter, and trained her until I knew she could do ten miles an hour easily. My partner, Mac Morris, was to make the trip on the train, while I would drive my fast trotter to a little cart, taking with me a tent and big banner with "New York Hardware" on it.

We loaded four wagons with hardware from our Guthrie store and had them waiting just back of the land seekers on the line. As soon as the way was open their drivers were to come on to Perry.

I had a plat of the town and knew what lot I wanted, but I didn't get it.

I had expected my horse to go trotting easily over the prairie, and was astonished at the jam I got into. People on both sides of me, in front and behind and everywhere you could see were running their horses as hard as they could, and we all had to keep going at that pace.

There was a commotion once, people turning, trying to keep from running over something. I looked and had a glimpse of a horse down and a man pouring something out of a bottle down its throat. The man was W. H. Coyle.

Then we were past, rushing on at the same speed. My horse ran with big lunges for she was a big horse. The little cart was almost jerked to pieces. Luckily I had prepared for that and had wired up securely every place that could fall apart.

About a mile this side of Ferry was a big gulch. I didn't see how that mob of vehicles was going to cross that gulch without slowing down a lot. But they never slackened speed a bit, went right down and up and on, wheel to wheel, and right on each other's heels. When we reached the edge of

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Perry of course we scattered. I made for the lot I wanted which was near the town pump, but a man with a Winchester was there ahead of me and began cussing me, so I went on. Not finding anything else I came back in a few minutes and that man was gone, but about twenty other people were on it.

About a block down the street I found my partner. We set up our tent on his lot and stretched up the banner across the front of it. At four o'clock the four wagons full of stuff arrived and we began to do business. By 11:00 P.M. we had sold out all of it. Things that we would have sold for 25 cents in Guthrie, brought \$1.25 that night in Perry.

More goods arrived soon by train, and we built a store building. I ran that store for two years but kept my home in Guthrie.

The lot east of us was taken by Jack Turney, a saloon-keeper from Guthrie. He was running a place in a tent, and every morning about 3:00 A.M. there would be some shooting in his place. I placed the cot that I slept on so that the stove would protect me from bullets. Then I got to worrying about some powder we kept for shooting wells. If a stray bullet had struck that stock of powder it would have blown



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up the town. I got up and arranged my supply of grindstones so as to protect the powder, and slept better after that.

Perry was the dirtiest place I ever saw. The dust was inches thick on everything. It was in the food until you could hardly eat it, and water of any kind cost 5 cents a cupful.

One man went down along a little creek and dug a big dugout back into the bank, and served meals in there out of the dust. It was so much cleaner that people lined up, fifteen or twenty waiting outside at a time to get their meals.

After about two years I sold out my interest in this Perry store, and came back to Guthrie. I also sold my hardware interests in Guthrie and went into the clothing business. I was in that business until 1911.

For twelve years I lived in Wichita but returned to make Guthrie my home. I have always found Guthrie a good town to make money in.