

MADISON, SARAH HARNED

INTERVIEW

#9009

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

MADISON, SARAH HARNED INTERVIEW 9009

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin

Report made on (date) October 27 1937

Name Mrs. Sarah Harned Madison

Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) 1018 East Industrial Street

DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 12 Year 1874

Place of birth Fremont County Iowa

Name of Father Thomas Harned Place of birth Indiana, about

1844

Other information about father Died in 1912, in Idaho

Name of Mother Mary Robinson Harned Place of birth TENNESSEE

Other information about mother Died in 1896 about 1844

... or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and  
... 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 8

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Nora Lorrin,  
Investigator,  
October 27, 1937.

an interview with Mrs. Sarah Harned Madison,  
1012 East Industrial Street, El Reno, Okla.

Mrs. Sarah Harned Madison was born in Fremont County, Iowa, May 12, 1874. Her father, Thomas Harned, was born in Indiana about 1844 and died in Idaho in 1912.

Her mother, Mary Robinson Harned, was born in Tennessee in about 1844 and died in 1886. They were married in Atchison County, Missouri, and there were eight children born to them, seven girls and one boy.

~~Mrs. Madison grew up in Iowa and married Mr. Charles~~  
T. Madison in 1892. They were the parents of two girls and one boy before they left Iowa. They came to Oklahoma in 1897 and it was the hope of getting a piece of land that brought them here. They had heard that there was still land in the strip that had not been taken and they were hoping to get a claim in the Cherokee Strip.

They made their trip in a covered wagon, with two teams, leaving most of their household goods behind them in Iowa bringing just what they could conveniently in their

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one wagon.

The trip took them almost a year as they came slowly working their way. They left Iowa in 1896, going first to visit Mr. Madison's brother , who lived at Brunson, Kansas. Leaving Brunson, in a short time they went to Fort Scott, Kansas, where Mr. Madison got work in the coal mines.

Later, they left Fort Scott and went to Pittsburg, Kansas, where Mr. Madison again got work in the coal mines. He worked in the mines for a time and then they went to Newkirk.

At first her husband worked at husking corn and digging wells. They lived two and one-half miles southeast of Newkirk, on the Arkansas River. Their home was a little one room sod house twelve by fourteen.

There were a good many tarantulas about and sometimes they would get in the house. The Madison family had an old brindle bull dog that very obligingly killed the tarantulas. While living in this vicinity they could hear the Indians dancing, but Mrs. Madison never

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went to see any of the Indian dances.

Later, they lived in a box house of two rooms.

Mr. Madison did not get the farm they were hoping for but did get enough work to keep them. He worked on a ranch there that later became a part of the Miller Brother's 101 Ranch. At that time there were two ranches, one owned by the Miller Brothers and one owned by a man named Bressie.

The two ranches were separated by a creek and one was the 101 Ranch and the other was designated as the 102 Ranch. They all lived in tents while working on the 102 Ranch. The only house was the ranch house, a log house of four rooms, constructed in a long string of rooms.

There were sheds and barns for the cattle. They lived on the Bressie Ranch for seventeen months. There were about fifty cattle chasers (that is <sup>what</sup> they called the cowboys, up there at that time,) and fence riders. All they did was to round up the cattle and chase them. This ranch built large wooden troughs and set them around the ranch in places convenient for the cattle and kept

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them filled with rock salt.

While they were living here the Indians would come to their tents and visit a lot; Mr. Madison liked to talk to them and they seemed to like him. The Indians had a habit of hanging around the ranches. They liked to trade and they did it on that account. They could sometimes make a trade with the cow men and they liked "Wo haw".

When they were living near Newkirk Mr. Madison and two of his neighbors were out one day with the brindle bull dog along and the dog killed the largest rattle - snake that Mrs. Madison has ever seen. It was at least seven feet long and her husband and the men who were with him decided that it was about thirty years old. She does not remember the number of rattles but she says there was a long string of them and she knows there were at least twenty of the rattles.

In the killing the dog was bitten three times and as soon as the snake was dead the dog headed for a spring

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and stayed there lying in the mud and frequently rolling over and over in it. Its head swelled as big as a water bucket, its eyes swelled shut and you could not tell that it had any ears; but it got well. It never left the mud hole for nine days.

There were lots of snakes centipedes and tarantulas up there then. The main snakes were blacksnakes, bull snakes and rattlers.

One time out near Ponca City Mrs. Madison saw a panther. They lived around Newkirk in the Cherokee Strip until 1901 and then they moved to El Reno, arriving in July of 1901, hoping to be successful in drawing a claim when the Kiowa and Comanche country was opened.

They had been working in the harvest fields just before coming to El Reno threshing wheat.

They pitched their tent and made camp over on the north side of the Canadian River bridge north of El Reno. That put them away from the main crowd that was there during the opening of the Kiowa and Comanche

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lands. But at that there were a good many people over there on that side of the river. There were two tent stores and Mr. Samms ran a butcher shop in a tent. Townsends ran a store and a man named Pagel ran one.

Mr. Madison did not get a claim and so they moved to about the 1000 block on South Rock Island Street and pitched their tent on the east side of the street and lived in the tent at that location for about a year.

Mr. Madison's first job was hauling rock for the erection of the court house. He unloaded the first load of rock on the court house grounds; this load of rock was to build the foundation of that building.

Mr. Madison later helped to plant trees all over town and helped in the making of sidewalks. The first sidewalks were made of boards. He has dug many of the wells and cisterns about town.

There were three public wells in El Reno when they came here; two on Rock Island Street and one down by



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the mills. The two on Rock Island Street had wooden troughs for the horses to drink out of and the one by the mills had a couple of cement troughs. They were for everybody to use who wanted to. Water was obtained with rope, buckets and pulley. Buckets were of the old oaken bucket variety. In 1902 there was an epidemic of diphtheria and a good many people died of it and the schools had to be closed.

There were two Chinese laundries in El Reno; they were located about where the Missouri Hotel is now at 301 North Choctaw.

They moved to their present location in 1911 renting it until 1922 when Mrs. Madison bought it. There is a nice four room frame house on it, comfortably furnished. Since her husband's death in 1917, Mrs. Madison has worked at the sanitarium at 820 East Wade and when she quit work this summer she had worked at the same place for twenty years.

Mr. Madison worked with the construction crew when the Rock Island Railroad was being built into

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Oklahoma. The road ran through an old Indian graveyard. The Indians were furious about it: The Indians wanted the railroad workers to pile the bones in a pile so that the Indians could carry them away and re-bury them somewhere else but those men would not do it. They did not want to take the trouble and realizing that the Indians were watching them, they tantalized the Indians by playing ball with the skulls and kicking them around.

The Indians tried to frighten the white men away by yelling and dancing around the white men's camps at night, thinking that if they gave them no rest, and frightened them enough they would go away and leave the Railroad unfinished.

In the early days Mr. Madison was also a freighter on the Chisholm Trail.