

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

Field Worker's name Ida B. Lankford

This report made on (date) November 23, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Anna Griffin
2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) East Caddo Street.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 2 Year 1869
5. Place of birth Georgia.

6. Name of Father T. J. Morris Place of birth Georgia
Other information about father Farmer
7. Name of Mother Susan Janson Place of birth Georgia
Other information about mother Housewife.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggestions and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 6.

GRIFFIN, ANNA.

INTERVIEW.

#9299

Interview with Mrs. Anna Griffin
East Caddo Street, Cordell, Oklahoma

Investigator - Ida B. Lankford
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
November 23, 1937

My husband, W. C. Jones, and I came to Cloud Chief in 1900. Mr. Jones chartered a car and shipped his horses and farming implements to Mountain View, which at that time was as far as the Rock Island Railroad went. My sister and her husband, W. H. Bills, lived at Cloud Chief. Mr. Bills was in the grocery business there. We rented a farm and moved onto it. The water was hard and did not agree with us, but we were very well contented until my husband was taken sick with pneumonia in 1901. He was sick two months and twelve days and died the 12th day of March, 1901. We had three little boys aged ten, eight and three and I could not see my way to go on alone. I was so heartbroken and discouraged. My parents wanted me to come back home to Burleson, Texas. I sold out my personal property, which was all I had, and moved back to Texas. I will never forget the people who were so kind and good to us during my husband's illness. They were neighbors in every possible way. I stayed in Texas nearly two years but I was not satisfied. I wanted to come back and make my home here. My

sister and her husband had moved to Gotebo, as the railroad had moved on farther west and I came back to try and buy a home. Mr. Bills helped me and we found an eighty acre place for sale, nine miles northwest of Gotebo.

I paid \$700.00 for the place or rather for the relinquishment and then I filed on the place. It had a half dugout, 12 x 24, a shingled roof with wooden floors and four windows which gave very good ventilation and a small barn.

The grass land was all fenced and had a drilled well of good soft water; the land was a little sandy, and was good soil. My little boys and I moved onto this farm in the Spring of 1903. I did not have money enough to buy stock, and implements to work the place, so I rented it all but about five acres. My renter planted and cultivated these five acres for me and we chopped cotton to pay him for his work. I gathered two bales of cotton off this acreage.

That Fall I bought a team of horses and a turning plow and cultivator and we picked enough cotton for my renter and

other neighbors to buy a cow and two pigs. Ernest, the oldest boy, was not stout enough to hold the plow and guide the horses in breaking the land. Frank guided the horses and the other the plow. I took turns with them. It was

a hard struggle to get the land broken and the crop planted, but we did it and made a good crop. At the end of the third year, we had five head of cattle, two good horses, farming implements, enough feed to run us another year, lots of chickens, hogs to make our meat and some money in the bank. We always attended church on Sundays. My brother-in-law was a minister of the Church of Christ. He surely was a great help to me in giving advice and encouragement. Of course, there were discouraging times when it seemed I could not carry on but I always trusted in my Heavenly Father to help me and that faith is what carried me through. I always tried to live within my means.

In 1904, I was married to W. H. Griffin of Cordell, a man I had known for some time. Mr. Griffin's wife died a year or two after my husband died. Mr. Griffin had been elected Sheriff of Washita County in 1905. So I left the farm and moved to Cordell. The sheriff in those days did not get a salary. He got a fee for serving papers of different kinds and for mileage and we did not have cars then, so when Mr. Griffin had to serve papers,

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he rode on horseback, or went in a buggy and it would take him almost a day to go twelve or fifteen miles. He was not allowed an undersheriff, as sheriffs are now, so I began doing his office work for him and for three years we lived at the jail and fed the prisoners and were the jailers, also. It was almost as hard work as living on the farm but I did not mind. I had the opportunity to keep the children in school, to give each of them a chance for an education, which I did not have on the farm, where I needed their help early in the Spring and early in the Fall. Sometimes I had to act as jailer, sometimes as sheriff in Mr. Griffin's absence. I have sat at the telephone for hours, getting in touch with other officials when something urgent would come up, and the force would all be out on official business. The prisoners were always nice to me; they all called me "Mother Griffin" and I always saw that they had Bibles and other good reading matter in their cells. We had the satisfaction of having the Commissioner of Charities tell us that ours was the cleanest and best kept jail in the state. That statement was published in the "Herald", a paper published by Mr. Gunsenhouser here in Cordell.

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We made mistakes as everyone does, for none of us are perfect, but we tried to do the best we knew at the time.

In January, 1911, Mr. Griffin's term expired and we moved to his farm five miles southeast of town. It seemed so peaceful and quiet. The children were great big boys by then, and were of much help and comfort to us. Mr. Griffin raised corn and alfalfa, stock, and hogs, and there in 1913, our daughter Ina Francis was born and we all thought she was the only baby in the world. Soon the boys began to marry and make homes for themselves and we could not run the farm without quite a bit of expense, so we moved back to town. Mr. Griffin's health began to fail in 1919. The death of his daughter Hattie, in 1918, and my boy, being Frank, in the war, brought on a nervous condition and his health gradually failed. He died in 1923. Our daughter Ina was ten years old at that time, and she was surely a comfort to me. I had something to do, to look forward to her education, her bringing up to be a good Christian woman. Now, in 1937, she is married and living in California; my two sons Ernest and Frank Jones are near me. My youngest boy, Earl, passed away November 26, 1930, at Oklahoma City.