

JONES, SILVINA WILLIAMS THOMPSON. INTERVIEW.

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ETHNOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Division District of Columbia

JONES, SILVINA ILLIAMS THOMPSON

INTERVIEW.

13162.

Field Worker's name Hazel B. Greene.

This report made on (date) March 9, 1938

1. Name Silvina Williams Thompson Jones.

2. Post Office Address Fort Towson.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1867.

5. Place of birth 1 mile east of Doakville.

6. Name of Father Charlie Williams. Place of birth Springfield, Missouri.

7. Name of Mother Izzie - B. Williams Place of birth Memphis, Tennessee.

Other information about mother _____

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 five sheets.

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Hazel B. Greene,
Investigator,
March 9, 1938.

An Interview with Silvina Williams Thompson Jones,
Fort Towson, Oklahoma.

My father and mother were slaves and were sold to dealers at their old homes in the old states and brought to the Indian Territory, and sold again. A white man named Jim Dibble owned my father and he was the overseer on the Dr. Henry Folsom place, about a mile west of Doaksville, Indian Territory, in the Choctaw Nation, when I was born there in the old slave quarters. I can remember living out there, then my folks moved to the Piney Ridge across the branch north of Doaksville. There, the negroes settled thick, just like a small town of their own, off up there on the ridge away from the white folks.

Britt Willis had a daughter named Lizzie, who would be 67 years old if she was living and I was big enough to tote her around when she was a baby. So I know I am a lot older than she was. Miss Lizzie married Bob Peeler first then Mr. George Pritchard.

Mr. Willis had another daughter later, Mrs. George Rosenthal and they lived down at Doaksville. Mr. Rosenthal

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was a Jew and had a general merchandise store off and on at Doaksville for as far back as I can remember, nearly. The store was close to his house. I used to love to go there and play with their children. I would run off and go. My mother would take me home and "whup" me, and I'd run off again and go. I'd go to the gin and crawl up in it and hide until Mama would go to Mr. Rosenthal's looking for me and then come back past there going home. Then I'd slip out and go to Mr. Rosenthal's house. Finally Mama got tired of it and just gave me to Mrs. Rosenthal for a house girl and nursemaid for the children. I raised them 'chillum' I never went to school, all I know is what the white folks taught me.

I remember that big old double log house out on the Dr. Henry Folsom place. The overseer, Mr. Jim Dibble, lived in it, and we 'niggers' lived in the slave quarters. East of the big house was a tan yard and the cabin of Grandpa Travis, and old slave who supervised the tanning of the leather and made shoes for all the darkies. I wore some of the shoes. I remember when they raised wheat on that place and ground it in the flour mill out there close to

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the tan yard. They raised lots of wheat too, and sold the flour. People came there for flour, just like going to a grist mill for corn meal.

They raised cotton on that plantation, too, but I don't know where they ginned it, because I was a great big girl before there was a cotton gin at Doaksville. Then by that time the darkies had moved over on the ridge north of town, where each had a little cabin and a patch of their own to cultivate. And that was a tough place. "Lawd God!" Especially on Saturday nights. If we'd hear a gun shooting, we could just say, 'somebody daid', 'cause nearly sho it would be that way.'

After Mr. and Mrs. Rosenthal took me for a house-girl they didn't 'low me out'n the house, only to go to the sto' or to the well, 'til I was grown and married. Even then I worked on there for years.

Mr. Rosenthal was a good tailor. Them days, the women wore tight fitting basques, with stays in them so they would fit neatly. He made many a one for me. He had a store and handled good goods. He had them freighted from Paris, and Clarksville, Texas, before the railroad was built north from Paris, Texas, through the Indian Territory. I remember one

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night I had on a pretty green basque, with a big bow 'bowed up' behind, and a long full skirt with a draped overskirt, and a hoopskirt under that and about three petticoats. Oh I was dressed to kill, and we were all at a dance when I had 'my opposite co'ner' shot dead at my feet as I started to swing him. He was named Gibbie Durant, and was an Indian. Joe Willis was my partner. I was scared so bad when somebody shot him from the door, that I ran around and 'round screaming. Joe backed me up in a corner and put his hand over my mouth to make me hush. Then they drug him out on the porch, and 'sont' word to his folks that he was dead and to come git him, and we 'rung up' and went on dancing. We had 'rid' about ten or twelve miles horseback down there to that dance and supper, close to Chee-lock, and we wasn't going to let that break it up. That kind of an occurrence was too common to let it break up our good times. Then Indians and native born mixed negro-Indians sure were mean. They'd just kill each other'at the drop of a hat.'

I remember Dr. Henry Folsom very well. He lived in a log house in Doakville when he stuck a big old long locust thorn through his foot and he died from that. Those hills

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were thick with locust trees. After he died, his brother, Colonel Sim Folsom, came to live in that house. He and his wife, Oliva. There, their son, Grover Cleveland Folsom was born about 1890. He was killed in France I believe in the World War. That house is standing today. Colonel Sim Folsom never walked for twenty odd years before he died. He was paralyzed. He died in his sleep one night after having gone to bed seemingly as well as usual. Oliva died a year later of pneumonia.

I want to say some more about our clothes. We wore tight fitting jerseys too, with many gored skirts with trains to them. Some called them 'trails.' Our high collared basques were topped with white lace or embroidered collars, and round covered buttons were down the front as thick as we could put them. For everyday wear, our dresses were made of Hickory shirting.

I first married Richmond Thompson, a long tall black negro, like myself, and we separated, then I married 'Mr. Jones' and he died. Ise a widow lady now.