

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

KELLER, H. FORNEY (DR.) INTERVIEW. 8125

Field Worker's name Jennie Selfridge

This report made on (date) August 4, 1937

1. Name Dr. H. Forney Keller

2. Post Office Address Madill, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Madill, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 23 Year 1875

5. Place of birth Jacksonville, Alabama

6. Name of Father M. W. Keller Place of birth Georgia

Other information about father Fought in Southern army, moved to Texas in 1875.

7. Name of Mother Susan Gordon Place of birth Alabama

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 3.

Jennie Selfridge
Investigator.
August 4, 1937

An interview with Dr. H. Forney Keller
Madill, Oklahoma.

In December of 1879 four families left Cooks County, Texas, and came across Red River into the Indian Territory. They were the Davis, Keller, Averett and Cochran families, all of whom settled near the site of the present town of Lebanon. Their post office was at Rocky Point, west of the present town of Madill.

Every Saturday R. L. Davis, who was then a very small boy, would get on a horse and carry two bushels of corn to an old tread mill near Lebanon and have it ground into meal.

The children later attended school at a split log school house on Wilson Creek. This was a subscription school, and Highsaw was the first teacher. Later Professor Fite taught there.

The children really worked in those days. Every family had an old ash hopper in the back yard; for months they would carry ashes from the fireplace and put in this hopper. When it began to get full the children would start carrying water and pouring in it. The water had to be carried every

afternoon. In a few days the lye would start running down out of the ashes. They would take this lye, place it with meat scraps, and make up a supply of soft soap.

Mr. R. L. Davis farmed with a yoke of oxen and learned his multiplication tables by counting eggs in a country grocery store.

At first the Keller family had a one eyed horse to work their crop with. The horse died and for a while they worked an ox and a bull which belonged to Scott Wright, a negro, who lived near by. One day the bull balked, lay down in the cotton middle and began to roll his eyes. Dr. Keller was driving him at the time. He thought the bull was dead and ran home half scared to death. After that his father bought a yoke of steers and several years later bought a team of mules.

Dr. Keller's mother died August 31, 1890, and was buried at the Chickasaw Orphan's Home Cemetery.

Another interesting character of that section at about the same time was a woman known as "old lady Stewart". She came out from Mississippi, bringing with her fifty head of white cattle, and settled at Gum Springs, two miles north

3

of the old town of Holder in the Chickasaw Nation on Wilson Creek and here continued to raise white cattle.

Dr. Forney Keller first entered the drug business at Lebanon in 1905 he began operating his own drug store there, and continued until 1919, at which time he sold out and moved to Madill. For several years he operated his own drug business in Madill, and at the present time he is druggist for the Corner Drug Store at Madill.