

LAMAR, JENNIE

INTERVIEW

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

Field Worker's name Nannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) September 23, 1937 1937

1. Name Mrs. Jennie Lamar

2. Post Office Address Fairland, Rt. 2, ^C/₂ Mrs. LeMaster.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 13.

Interview with Mrs. Jennie
Lamar, Fairland, Oklahoma.

Interviewer -- Nannie Lee Burns
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
September 23, 1937

DAYS THAT I LIKE TO RECALL.

~~My parents were Frank Fisher and George Ann~~
Fisher nee Clark. They were born in Kentucky and
married in that state. I had five sisters and one
brother, Stephen, who now lives at Okmulgee. He was
~~ninety-two last February.~~ I was born at Lee's
Summit, Missouri, near Kansas City on June 21, 1848.

GIRLHOOD DAYS.

My parents when they came West settled at Lee's
Summit. They hoped to better their condition and
thought they would have a better chance in a new country.
At that time Wyandotte, now Kansas City, was a good
trading place and work was plentiful. When they first
came the landing on the Missouri River was still called
Westport. We had only a small house and an increasing
family. Everyone in the family had to work. As there
was only one son, we had to help with the work out of

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doors besides make our own clothes, help raise the produce and dry and prepare it for winter use.

NEIGHBORS.

One of the closest neighbors that we had was the Younger family. The boys and we children grew up together. They were not bad boys. After they were forced from home and had to scout about the country and keep out of the way of the law they came many times to our home. Cole Younger when talking to us has shed many tears over the unfairness that forced them from home.

We also knew the James boys well and I have been at Jesse's grave at or rather near Kearney, Missouri. The stone that was placed at his grave has been chipped by souvenir hunters and bits carried away till the folks took down all but the base of the stone which had the name on it and placed the stone in safe keeping.

CIVIL WAR DAYS.

My father was a Federal guard at Kansas City during the war. The family at this time was living

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in Johnson County, Missouri. Wash Wells, my first husband's father, was killed by the Kansas Jayhawkers, Jim Lane's men. Cousin Dick Yeager freighted across the plains. He was killed at Sedalia by Quantrell's men.

Food, that is store bought, grew very scarce and you could get only a peck of salt at a time but then we did not have to do without things such as they tell me they did in this state. The cows that belonged to Mrs. Wells, my first husband's mother, were taken from her and driven into Kansas. She knew who took them, so she followed them and brought her cows home.

MARRIAGE.

I married Sam Wells, a Shawnee Indian, and went to live at and near Kansas City. Our two children were born there. Before our second son was born, Sam began to work on the M. K. & T. Railroad that was building south. I remained in Kansas City but when our child was six months old he came for me and I

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started with him to where they were camped at that time near Parsons, Kansas. We made the trip by wagon and in the dark that night we got off the road and got lost.

THE CONSTRUCTION CAMPS.

At first we worked under Nickle and later under Brenen. We had only a tent and two wagons and cooked on an out-door fire but I had always worked so I began by boarding four of the men. My husband had three teams working and I saved my money from my boarders and before we left Parsons I had purchased two teams of my own and placed them at work on the construction.

There were several different construction camps and when your allotted part of the grading was done you moved around the camps working south of you and took your location in the lead. From a rural family I purchased an old stove and added to my equipment gradually.

Mrs. Brenen, who was cooking for the gang, took

sick and I took on the job of cooking for all of the men.

After leaving Parsons we camped just north of Vinita, when Vinita was known as the Junction, and there was only a blacksmith shop there. This had posts for walls and a cover over the top.

With the taking of the gang, I had to increase my accommodations, so I now had white planks that we afterwards hauled from camp to camp. We had two long tables set a little ways apart with the opening between them leading into my tent and the cooking was done at the other end of the tables. I worked until 10 and 11 o'clock at night as I had ^{from} fifteen men up to cook for.

Money was plentiful and I found much that had been dropped. Paper money that we had gotten in the states had to be discounted 10 percent everywhere except at the banks and after we crossed the Territory line we did not have very many banks. The pay train ran the fifteenth of the month and each month it would run as

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far as the rails were laid. They paid us in gold and silver. After the pay train, some of the men would have to celebrate, play cards and gamble, and in a few days some were broke or very hard up.

My youngest boy, just able to walk, would play around my tent and soon learned his way to the commissary tent where he was given many little things to eat.

From Vinita we went to Choteau and here I purchased two more teams and put them to work so I had four teams working to my husband's three.

Before going into Texas we were camped in the Kiamichi Mountains. I was milking one night when I heard a panther scream; it came closer next time. I left my milking unfinished.

After leaving here we crossed the Red River into Texas and I did no good from that time on. I had been on the road so long, the mosquitoes, the new country and bad water began to tell on me and at McKinney, Texas, our baby and I became sick. Our baby was then

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three years old. We had been working on the railroad for two and a half years. The doctor said I had the spotted fever and that my husband would have to take me out of that country. He sold our teams, etc., and we started for home. We were in a wagon. My son died on the road and they buried him at Prairie Grove, Arkansas. I did not know when he died. After I grew better, my husband said that we would take the money we had earned and go back and buy my father's old home. We stopped at Choteau to collect a hundred dollars that we had loaned to one of the men on the road. He had written to us to know where to send the money but we had not answered the letter.

LIFE IN INDIAN TERRITORY.

Not yet being strong, my husband left me at Choteau and went to the Kansas wheat fields. When he returned he brought back with him a wagon load of flour. The woman I had been staying with had been eating corn

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bread as she could not afford flour. I was here six months when we started homeward again. This time we got as far as Chetopa, Kansas, when my husband changed his mind and here he rented a place or, I should say, took a lease seven miles south of Chetopa, on Horse Creek. He fenced and cleared the land. We had a one room frame house with a side-room and porch. We leased from Mrs. Secrest who lived in the edge of Chetopa. While living on this place, my husband sold out and left me there with one child. I was to stay with Mrs. Secrest for a few days. While gone he met the Younger brothers and joined them. I think he thought he would avenge the killing of his father as they knew who had killed him. He was killed in Minnesota with them.

I was a mid-wife and now that I was compelled to earn my living, I began and have kept a record of my services through the many years since.

I stayed with the Mack Bowen family for a while. They moved farther down in the state and leased a place,

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I came with them. Here I met Mrs. Tilda Harlan. She wanted me to stay with them, so I lived with them for six months. After that I lived with the Coffey Woodall family for seven years, making that my home, but still helping with the sick.

Then I married Bill Reid, a Cherokee, and went to live on the Lee Williams' place, north of Copeland and south of Fairland. At that time Kinch West's sister lived there. Bill lived two years and after his death I went back to Woodall's to live. They sold my place and furniture for me. This time I lived with^{them} for either four or five years.

Next I married Ewing Lamar, another Cherokee, and we settled in the Lamar settlement, three miles south of Fairland. We had one child, Sarah Elizabeth (called Sallie). Ewing began to drink and we parted without a divorce. Ewing's father forged my name to a bill of sale to the place I was living on, to Clay and Willis Brown. Rather than send him to the pen for it,

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I bought a claim from Ellis Moore, one and a half miles mostly north and a little west of Hickory Grove.

MY LAST HOME.

When I bought the claim it had only a very old worthless log room on it, no barns or sheds and that winter my cows and horses stood on the south side of the house for shelter from the winds and storms. I traded walnut logs for boards to box up a stable. Bought corn that winter, paying \$25.00 for one-hundred bushel and I hauled it in the snow. I had "workings" and the men in the neighborhood came and got me wood.

Later I built a better house and had a log raising to get it put up. I gave a dance that night. I always gave a Christmas dance.

I tried to take care of those in want and always had a house full of widows and orphans. I raised eight children besides my daughter.

When I came here all the women wore handkerchiefs over their heads. I made them their first bonnets.

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I married again, but he was worthless and almost killed a mare and I ran him off. I lived here till allotment, then my daughter Sallie allotted the homeplace. She married Bill Fields, a Cherokee. After that I broke up housekeeping and for a while made my home with the John Jones' family, but for a good many years now I have had no certain place to stay, just live here a while and then with some of the others. I have three great-great grandchildren.

LITTLE INCIDENTS MENTIONED.

I was coming from Southwest City one day late in the Fall where I had been to mill. The river was up and it was late and dark. John Connolly and Dal Flint had also reached the bank. John drove across for me and to see our way across we burned a whole box of matches. This left Dal on the other side and he being afraid that John would leave him started to wade the stream and when John started back for him he met him half across the stream.

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I met Deliah (Dal's wife) not long ago and she wanted to know what I had done to keep from being wrinkled like the rest of the old folks.

"When I faced the storms when you and the others were sick I froze all the wrinkles out going to you folks," I replied.

Note. Aunt Jennie, who has a remarkable memory and likes to talk, was at her granddaughter's the day I saw her and during the interview we had many interruptions, but she said she expected to come to Miami soon for a visit with a niece and she would let me know when she came and then she added, "We will talk all day."

If this opportunity presents itself, I will try to get some parts of this more in detail and will supplement this story.