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

LEVERETT, MARY JANE

INTERVIEW

#9232

Field Worker's name Ethel V. Elder

This report made on (date) November 10 1937

1. Name Mary Jane Leverett

2. Post Office Address Waurika, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) N. Meridian Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 7 Year 1860

5. Place of birth Sulphur Springs, Texas

6. Name of Father Mr. Wm. B. Duncan Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father Buried Grayson County, Texas

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Vaden Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother Buried Plainview, Texas.

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 6

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Ethel V. Elder
Investigator
November 10, 1937.

Interview with Mary Jane Leverett
N. Meridian Street, Waurika, Okla.

I was born April 7, 1860, at Sulphur Springs, Texas. My father was Doctor William B. Duncan, who was born in the state of Virginia, March 16, 1800. He died in August, 1874, and is buried in Grayson County, Texas. My mother was Elizabeth Vaden. She was born in the state of Texas, April 7, year unknown. She is buried in Plainview, Texas.

When I was a little girl I attended a private school, which we called a paid tuition school. The building was a very small log one.

When we went to church my father would load all us kids in the old ox cart and we would start to church early in the morning. It would take us several hours to get there as the oxen would travel so slowly. Sometimes we would take our dinner baskets along, filled with good things to eat, and would stay for the meeting in the afternoon. We always had good singing at the meeting which I always enjoyed about as much as the preaching.

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All our dresses were made from calico and I can remember my mother saying that she always put about sixteen yards of material in our dresses. They were made over hoops and would have four and five ruffles on the skirt. The waist was made a very tight basque with little hip pockets all ruffled up around the pocket. Our hats we called Sun Downs, worn tight over the head. We thought they were very handsome. Our next style of hats were the Sailor, straight brims, with just a narrow band around the crown. Then we had the Poke Bonnets. They were worn on the back of our heads with a brim that was off the face. These always had a little bunch of posies and lots of ribbon and they tied under our chin with a large bow of ribbon.

We girls used to go horseback riding with our sweethearts; we rode the side saddle and I don't know how we managed to get on the horse and ride with those hoops on.

I was married October 3, 1880, to Thomas Benjamin Leverett, at Basin Springs, Texas, close to the Town of Sherman.

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In 1893 moved to Ringgold, Texas, and lived on a farm from where we came to the Indian Territory and settled at the little place of Healdton. There was a small post office and one or two very small stores there then. We lived in a half dugout there for a long time. We ran a photography business there at Healdton for some time.

In 1898 we moved to Ryan and engaged in farming until 1907, when my husband was elected to the office of Township Trustee Assessor. He held this office until the office of County Assessor was established by the First State Legislature. He held this office until 1931, when he was defeated in the County Election.

The courthouse at that time was at Ryan. This was burned about the year 1912 and the county seat then was moved to Waurika in 1913. We then moved to the town of Waurika and have resided here ever since.

When my husband was campaigning the county for the office of Assessor he made the trip over the county with a horse and buggy. He would drive from house to house and when night came he would spend the night and then start out early next morning. He drove all over the county to each farm house.

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When we first came to Indian Territory we crossed Red River at Nocona, Texas, fording the river. We had two wagons, one drawn by a large span of mules and the other by very small mules.

We went to Lawton to register for the drawing of the land when time came for filing the claims, but we did not happen to be one of the lucky ones. There were so many that passed by night and day going to file for land, it looked like a long funeral procession.

My husband and his brother used to drive several hundred head of sheep to market for other people. The nearest market was Colorado City. It would take them two and three weeks to make the drive one way as they could not drive the sheep fast and they would have to let them graze along the way. They always had the chuck wagon to go along.

Our cooking in our homes was done in the old brick fire chimney. A large rod would be run through from each side of the chimney and on this a pole of some kind would be fastened to the rod to hang the pots on. We had our

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old Dutch ovens to do the baking in, with large coals of fire heaped on the lid. All our pies, cakes, biscuits and roast meats would be cooked in these ovens. Our potatoes would be baked in the ashes in front of the fireplace.

Our son-in-law, T. R. McConnell, made the run in '89 for homesteads and was allotted 160 acres for his homestead. There were no improvements on the land at all. He still lives on the land.

L. D. Major, A. R. Manton and S. M. Ryan all owned thousands of head of cattle and had the largest ranches and houses in this part of the Indian Territory.

We had old fashioned camp meetings and protracted meetings held under big tents like circus tents and large brush arbors and tabernacles would be built to hold the meetings in. Everybody for miles and miles around would come and camp for two and three weeks at a time. If they could not stay that long they would bring their dinners and stay all day and for the night service. Brother J. J. Ward, now pastor of the Emmanuel Baptist Church at Duncan, Brother Brad Hayes and Bob Hamilton were all early Missionary

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Baptist evangelists who used to hold these meetings. Brother Brad Hayes organized the First Baptist Church at Ryan and Brother Cole was the pastor at Ryan for many years. Mrs. Lena Means was a wonderful church worker with her father, Brother Cole. One time when Brother J. J. Ward was holding a meeting at Healdton when we lived there I was converted under his meeting and Brother Chandler baptized me and a bunch of others who were converted at this meeting. He was the Pastor at that time at Healdton..

I am the mother of ten children, three dead. All those living are married and have families of their own.

We celebrated our Golden Wedding Anniversary October 3, 1930, at our home here in Waurika with all our children living being present. I lived at the old home place all these years until after Mr. Leverett's death, April 23, 1936.