

LIVERMORE, GEORGIA.

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BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History - West for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Zaidée B. BlandThis report made on (date) December 21, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Georgia Livermore
2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) 712 E. Cypress
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 21 Year 1883
5. Place of birth Kentucky
6. Name of Father Julius Oldham Place of birth Kentucky
Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother Mary Hisee Place of birth Kentucky
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. Use as many blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 9

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Zaidee B. Bland,
Investigator,
December 21, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Georgia Livermore,
Altus, Oklahoma.

My family was an old time Kentucky family with all the old Southern traditions that seemed impossible to hold high after the Civil War.

After Father and Mother had a family of six girls they decided that they would come west and try to help plant civilization and culture in the Indian Territory.

On the first passenger train that ever ran through Guthrie in the year of 1888 was our family seeking a home in the west. We had heard terrible tales of the cyclones in the west so we must have a house with a storm cellar.

Father did not file until the second year we were out here. Then we moved onto the land and stayed until it was proved up. From Kentucky we brought with us the China treasured for more than a generation, blue pitchers, China cups for tea, which were used by my grandmother across the sea. These things perhaps were not so valuable but were real treasures to the family. They were all packed very carefully and

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placed in the first wagon load for Father was to drive and Mother was to be with him. Alas! - They drove the mules up to the back door of the new house on the farm and Mother got out. Father tied up the lines and was down to help her and no sooner was she on the ground until the mules became frightened at something, supposedly her ample skirts billowing out in the wind, and ran away upsetting the wagon and destroying all that precious China. That was real tragedy in our lives.

So afraid was Mother of the wind that every time we ~~heard it blow she gathered all six of her daughters and all their clothes and went promptly to the cellar.~~ For, said my mother, "I might as soon be blown away as to be without my daughters or for them to be without clothes".

My first school year was here. My father was one of the trustees. A one-room school building was built. When the school census was taken there was one negro child in the district. My father said "Now, my children cannot go to school with a negro". What was to be done? He and one of the other trustees at their own expense built another room and hired a teacher for this little negro so that he might have the advantage

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of school. I never saw my mother cook a meal in my father's life time. Father always said; "God never meant for white women to cook and wash and iron", so Aunt Viney, our black mammy, always presided in our kitchen. No matter how short the money- we could economize on food or somewhere else but Aunt Viney's salary always had to come and she had to stay in the kitchen or one of her kin whom she would recommend if she wanted time out. I remember once a white man remonstrated with Father about keeping a negro cook, reminding him that there was a very poor family who lived real near us who had a daughter who would be happy to have Aunt Viney's place in our household. My father replied, " I will have no hired white help in my kitchen ; that girl is my daughters' friend and as such visits in my home but if she was hired help in my kitchen my daughters could not associate with her."

We lived in a tent until a four-room two story house could be built for us to live in and a house was built on the claim very similar to the one we had before we moved out there. The water in all that country was soft; there were

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wells and springs and sometimes tanks were built for stock.

All social life was built around church activities. We had bazaars, church suppers, christmas trees and Easter programs. Everyone thought it an honor to be asked to take part in one of these programs or plays that the church put on and attended recitals as religiously as they went to church and Sunday School. Easter was a wonderful time of the year. Every little girl blossomed out in a new bonnet (hat) and lawn dress and there were many disappointed little girls if it rained or was cold as it so often was ~~and so very many times our new easter finery was spoiled in~~ the rain on the way home. Old and young, rich and poor all went to Sunday School and had to know their lessons.

The women did not vote of course but we took our politics very seriously and felt like we must take part in all the elections with parades, bannars flying, flags waving, we were very patriotic. Unfortunately for us we were born Democrats and Father would as soon have thought of changing his name as changing his politics, and Guthrie was a town with a Republican

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majority in those days. Father was very self-sacrificing and would let his name be put on the ticket as candidate for Sheriff, year after year, and would make the most enthusiastic campaign just as though he knew or believed he would be elected. We would have the grandest parades; we would decorate the floats in bunting and different girls would be appointed to represent the states the candidates were from. The name of the state would be written in big black letters on a wide band of white satin ribbon and we would stand very erect on the floats as they slowly were drawn by horses through the streets. A political campaign was a real jubilee and so were Fourth of July picnics. All these things were real in our life for there was no other form of entertainment. I don't remember how old I was before Guthrie ever had an opera house, and to the traveling shows that happened to come through; "Mollie Bailey" or a negro Minstrel show, the "quality" of the town never went. That was left for poor white trash and negroes.

We were reared to believe our Father or Mother could do no wrong. We were always looking to them as patterns. I

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remember the first wedding- It was my oldest sister, it was a very grand affair. It was at home but all things were decorated with flowers and white ribbon as streamers from all corners of the room; sister was in a white satin dress with a long long train. We younger girls were schooled in manners; we must be very sure to do nothing wrong. I remember wondering "What shall I do right". How will I know?"-so I reasoned it out, "I will watch Mother and do just as she does and I am sure she will be right and if I do just as she does, I will be right." Mother had a very bad cold and as she was talking to the preacher she put her handkerchief to her nose and I thought she was crying- I did not wait to see; I began to cry in real earnest- My! how I did cry until some one had to stop me.

Everything was an occasion and practice was carried on every night, for any entertainment, for weeks beforehand. Often everyone had to have a uniform. I think everyone thoroughly enjoyed these practices and were happy and flattered when asked to take part in any public entertainment and the coaching and drilling was educational. No expense or time was

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ever spared in putting on these celebrations or entertainments. At those Fourth of July picnics I cannot ever forget the food spread out for all alike to eat. The great white linen table-cloths spread on the grass, whole boiled hams and roasted fowls, fried chickens, cocoanut cakes and always hard boiled eggs pickled in beet vinegar to make them red. The picnic was always held near some creek where there was shade. We had grape vine swings, a merry-go-round drawn by a horse or mule. The men usually pitched horse shoes or had races and wrestling matches. The married women sat around and swapped recipes and gave each other advice as to bringing up their children. The young ladies and gentlemen strolled in the woods or sat on the banks of some water hole and talked or we called it "sparked" and threw pebbles into the water.

Aunt Viney told us marvelous tales of the supernatural. All negroes were very superstitious and are yet. I can't remember just why or how but there was to be a negro funeral and the body was to be brought in on the train and of course Aunt Viney had to go. All the darkies in the country met the train. All the pall bearers were negroes all decked out in their very

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best (which was usually some white man's discarded finery) worn regardless of season or color. There was a man standing on the platform as the body was lifted from the express car. He threw his voice to make it sound as though it was coming out of the coffin and said; "Let me down easy boys- let me down easy". Those pall bearers dropped that coffin right there and a negro never could be gotten to touch it again. White men had to be gotten to load the body into the hearse to carry it to the cemetery. Always a negro had to carry a rabbit's left hind foot in his pocket or tied around his neck to keep the spirits away.

I broke all traditions by taking a business education and working. I can remember the first old negro who came in to get a bill of sale for an old mule he was to sell to another negro-

I began my bill of sale and got his name all right and then I said "Well, Uncle, who you selling this mule to?" the old ducky replied "What dat man's name you mean Miss? 'Fore God Miss, I don't know dat ducky's name, we all calls him Cornbread."

"Well, you will have to find out his name, I cannot make out a bill of sale for a mule to Cornbread" I answered.

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My father would never hurt anyone's feeling if it could be avoided and we were taught that a lady was always gentle, never raised her voice or used anything but the purest English or French.