

WILLIAMS, F. L. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

9924

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

WILLIAMS, F. L. (MRS.) - INTERVIEW. 9924.

Field Worker's name Don Moon, Jr.

This report made on (date) February 5, 8, 1938

1. Name Mrs. F. L. Williams
2. Post Office Address Guthrie
3. Residence address (or location) 501 E. Harrison
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 18 Year 2
5. Place of birth Smithsburg, Maryland Formerly called Cavetown.

6. Name of Father John H. Bishop Place of birth Cavetown,
in relation about father- Civil Engineer-Yale graduate, Maryland.
7. Name of Mother Alice E. Bisore Place of birth Maryland.

Other information about mother Well educated and had been a teacher in Allantown and Union town, Pennsylvania.

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 7.

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Don Moon, Jr.,
Investigator.
February 5, 8, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. F. L. Williams
Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Father-John H. Bishop,
Mother-Alice E. Besore

John Hoyer Bishop was a native of Maryland. He could read at the age of two and a half years and was reading Virgil, Cicero and Livy when he was ten. He graduated from Yale as a Civil Engineer when twenty.

His father, Dr. Elijah Tracy Bishop, was also a graduate of Yale. The family belonged to the Episcopal Church. Mr. Bishop's first job was to help lay out the Union Pacific Railroad and he came to Oklahoma about six months after the Opening and bought a relinquishment on a quarter section just three miles straight east of Oklahoma City. He paid \$500.00 for this relinquishment. The first owner had started to build a one-room log cabin on it. Mr. Bishop finished this and a few years later built on one room and finished a loft-room in the log cabin.

His wife was an invalid and was never able to make the trip west. There were seven children. The children took

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turns coming out and living with their father, and Mr. Bishop's letters told his wife that he sometimes had to take a minister's place in his community. Two families in the neighborhood, the Hixons and the Tallmans, each one lost a little child and each asked Mr. Bishop to conduct the funeral services. So he took his prayer book and read the burial services and offered prayer over the little graves. He was never very strong, and farming was really too hard for him. But he loved his homestead and named it "Euchi Kenya" because an Indian Chief, White Cloud, and his people who used to camp there, called it the "Camp of the Never-Failing Spring." White Cloud was probably Chief of the Lowas as the line of their reservation was only about six miles east of Mr. Bishop's place.

Across the road from Mr. Bishop's farm, the Hixons had a slaughter-house and the Indians used to come there and beg for scraps of meat.

One day as Mr. Bishop lay dozing under a tree, Mr. Hixon called "Lay still, Mr. Bishop, lay still. There's a big bobcat at your head! Lay still and I'll get him." Mr. Bishop

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lay still and Hixon shot and killed the big cat that was crouching just over his head. Bishop stuffed the head and kept it.

Mr. Bishop was a Naturalist, and an authority on the birds of Oklahoma. He was the first person to discover the hermit thrush in this part of the country, also the Nuthalls Poor Will-something like the Whip-poor-will but much rarer. He sent the results of his findings on these rare birds to the University at Norman. All kinds of birds would come at his call and he considered birds real friends.

A neighbor woman once grew alarmed when she saw Mr. Bishop's buggy standing in the road in front of her house for a long time one spring day, and asked her husband to go down to the road and see if Mr. Bishop had become sick. When questioned Mr. Bishop said that he had just been looking for a certain robin that lived in those trees each summer adding, "It is time for him to be back. I am afraid that something has happened to him on the way". The neighbor man remembered that he had seen a robin in his back yard that morning and Mr. Bishop said "Oh, that's all right then. He's back and I'll

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be seeing him the next time I pass".

Another day Mr. Bishop was sitting under a tree and he felt something pulling his hair. A small bird was pulling some of Mr. Bishop's hair out through a hole in his old cap, and Mr. Bishop sat still until the bird had carried off a lot of hairs to line its nest. He sent specimens of the gravel that was plentiful in his neighborhood to Norman and ask^{ed} if it was suitable for graveling roads. It is now being used for that purpose.

Years ago Mr. Bishop was interested in stopping the erosion of the soil. He had seen so much washed away land in Maryland that he wanted to prevent such waste here. He kept all gullies and washes filled from the first on his own farm, and advised neighbors on the subject.

Mr. Bishop was considered eccentric because he was different from most of his neighbors. He was rather careless about his dress, due to the fact that until he was almost grown he was attended by his own body servant; never got into the habit of dressing himself carefully.

About 1898 Mr. Bishop was hired to go to Hawaii and survey for a railroad. He left his son Vann at the farm. Vann

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wanted some of his sisters to come out and stay with him, so Miriam and Pauline came out to Oklahoma. It was a long trip for the two young ladies from Maryland and they were homesick at first, but soon got acquainted with many nice people whom they met at church. Bishop Brooke (named Francis Key Brooke after a relative, Francis Scott Key, author of the Star Spangled Banner) was the first Bishop of Oklahoma and his headquarters were at Guthrie. Bishop Brooke was a native of Maryland, too, and his family and the Bishop family became close friends.

The company that Mr. Bishop was working for in Hawaii ran short of funds and were unable to pay his salary regularly, so times were hard for the three young Easterners. They were determined that they would not go in debt for anything, so went without many things.

Bishop Brooke had a little Indian pony named Spider that had been a gift from some of his Indian converts. He kept it on pasture at the Bishop's farm and gave Pauline and Miriam Bishop permission to ride it. Pauline used to ride Spider to neighboring farms to help the women with their sewing in order to make a little money to buy necessary

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things. Mr. Bishop was unable to collect his salary so he returned from Hawaii in 1901. The girls also peddled produce in the city. Then Bishop Brooke helped Pauline get a position as Primary teacher in the city schools. She had had special kindergarten training in New York City; and so she received a better salary than teachers usually started at. She taught for twenty-two years and only missed one day because of illness.

Miriam got a job in an office, and the family moved into town, but the father continued as long as he was able to spend all his working hours on the homestead. He died in 1928 and the log cabin home burned some time after that, destroying his books that he ^{had} prized very much.

Two railroads, the Rock Island and the Fort Smith, built through the Bishop's farm and the sale of these right-of-ways helped the family through some lean years. Later, about twenty acres were sold to be a part of the land where the Santa Fe reservoir was and which is now called the Country Club Lake. Miriam went back east and married and Pauline married F. S. Williams, an abstractor, in 1927.

Mr. Bishop, who was not old enough to serve in the War, heard Lincoln's Gettysburg address from just under the

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President's feet. He had crawled under the platform hours before, and lay just under the place where Lincoln stood, hearing his speech plainly through the wide cracks in the platform.