

WILLIAMS, MINNIE PINKSTON.

INTERVIEW

#9484

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

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin

This report made on (date) December 23, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Minnie Pinkston Williams

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 1821 South Choctaw Avenue.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 27 Year 1879

5. Place of birth Texas.

6. Name of Father Al Pinkston Place of birth Texas.

Other information about father Born February 11, 1850.  
Died in 1913

7. Name of Mother Lizzie Becknel Pinkston Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother Born February 23, 1856.

Died February 8, 1934.

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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Nora Lorrin  
Investigator  
December 23, 1937

Interview with  
Mrs. Minnie Pinkston Williams  
1821 South Choctaw  
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Minnie Pinkston Williams was born in Texas, May 27, 1879. Her father, Al Pinkston, was born in Texas, February 11, 1850, and died in 1913. Her mother, Lizzie Becknel Pinkston, was born in Missouri, February 23, 1856. There were eight children in the family, three girls and five boys.

Mrs. Williams came with her parents to Oklahoma in a covered wagon in 1891. They brought a bunch of cattle and horses with them. Her folks had two covered wagons and her father's brother and family came along and they, also, had two covered wagons, making a wagon train of four covered wagons, which was quite a procession with all the stock. Her father had two yoke of steers that were broken to work, but they did not use them to haul the wagons when coming to Oklahoma. Later after he had raised a crop of cotton, he used the steers to haul his cotton from his rented farm, twenty-five miles southwest of Norman, to the market at that place.

They lived on that farm for two years, renting it from a Pottawatomie Indian, Joe Burnett, and these Indians

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were good people. Their reason for coming to Oklahoma was because of Mrs. Williams' mother. She got a notion of wanting to come to the Indian country and she just "kept at" her husband until he was willing and they came.

When they planted their cotton, Mrs. Williams' brother laid off the rows with a one horse Georgia stock plow. Mrs. Williams rolled the cotton seed in ashes and water and planted the seed in the rows by hand. After she had planted the cotton seed, her father came along with a big rock fastened to a chain and pulled by a steer and covered the cotton seed by dragging the rock over the rows.

Mrs. Williams has planted many a row of corn by hand, two seed in a hill. She has picked cotton all her life and has often picked it with a baby lying on the sack, having to pull a sleeping baby as well as the sack of cotton. She is the mother of twelve children, ten of whom are living. The youngest is thirteen years of age and the oldest is thirty-eight years old. There were seven girls and five boys; one of the boys and one of the girls is dead.

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The first farm house they lived in in Oklahoma was a hewed double log house. Her father hewed the logs and built it. He also made the boards by hand that it was roofed with. They had milk cows and hogs.

They used to go to dances and parties during the week and to Sunday school and church on Sunday. Mrs. Williams went barefoot until she was twelve years old, and the first really nice pair of Sunday slippers she ever had her father sold a large heifer for \$6.00 and bought her and an older sister each a pair of Sunday slippers, paying 75¢ a pair for them. She was fourteen years old at the time. Her father has cut and sawed rails on a diet of corn bread and sorghum, and corn bread and sorghum was what the kids had to take to school in their lunch pails for their dinner.

They went barefoot everywhere and did not feel out of place since everybody else in their neighborhood did the same thing.

Mrs. Williams told me a story that her grandmother told her of early days in Texas. The little boys used to be dressed in shirts and nothing else, and as they grew older, the mothers would lengthen the shirts until by the time they were young men they were wearing their shirts

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to their ankles and they wore them and went barefoot even to see their best girls. So now Mrs. Williams sometimes shocks her kids by telling them that she knew of a time when the boys went to see their best girls barefoot and in their shirt tails.

Mrs. Williams' mother has many times taken her kids and walked five miles to visit a neighbor, stayed all night and walked the five miles home again the next day, thinking nothing about the long walk as a hardship. They wanted to go and as there was no other way to go, they just walked.

Mrs. Williams used to wear her dresses down to her ankles and has often put from eight to ten yards in her own dresses. She met and was married to Mr. Robert Williams in 1895. Her husband's father made the run in 1889 and got a claim ten miles south of Tecumseh. After she and Mr. Williams were married they moved to his daddy's farm and he built them a little one room log house. The first bedstead they had was a homemade wooden bedstead. Her father-in-law traded a wagon sheet for a cookstove for the newlyweds. It was a little four holed stove with an oven and it was set up on legs and burned wood.

Their food at that time was whippoorwill peas and corn bread. Mr. Williams' father killed some hogs and gave them some meat. Black jacks were thick and so they had plenty of wood. There were lots of rabbits and Mrs. Williams and her sister went down into what they called "Indian Hollow" when the snow was on the ground and tracked rabbits to the hollow trees and caught eleven of them. They used to kill their meat and sell their middlings and lard to get money to pay for having their cotton chopped. They killed from ten to eleven hogs every winter. The first crop they made after they were married Mrs. Williams dropped the corn by hand. She dropped corn over ten acres one day.

Her husband and her brother were working with her and one of them was laying off the rows and the other one was covering the seed. She would have stayed with them if she'd had to walk till her legs dropped off. She has done about everything on a farm except to break land.

They just rented their farms, never owning one. Her husband started in to raise enough colts to buy a farm but he was taken with leakage of the heart and the

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doctor advised him to travel and take things easy. They went from place to place, picking cotton. She helped to saw wood and they sold it for 50¢ a load.

Calico used to be 3¢ a yard. Mrs. Williams has bought flour for 50¢ for a fifty pound sack. When they were first married, her husband and his daddy would go to Tecumseh and lay in a supply of groceries for all winter, getting everything a little bit cheaper that way. They would buy fifty pounds of packaged "Lions Head" coffee and get it at 10¢ a pound. They bought checked material for shirts and dresses and also bought domestic by the bolt. Mrs. Williams did the sewing for her family, and also a lot of it for her husband's folks, using her mother-in-law's sewing machine.

The first Indian she ever saw was at Big Jim's Crossing, east of Norman. They were camped there and the timber was thick. She saw a little naked Indian boy with nothing on but a breech clout. He was hiding behind a tree and as she watched him, he kept motioning for her little sister to come to him. The little sister, who was five years old, was afraid and would not go. These Indians were of the Shawnee tribe. They used to go to the Indian



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stomp dances when the Williams family was at Big Jim's Crossing. The people would often make up enough money to buy a beef for the Indians in order to get them to dance.