

WILLIAMSON, MAGGIE MAY.

INTERVIEW 9581

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

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WILLIAMSON, MAGGIE MAY. INTERVIEW. 9581.

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) December 22, 1937. 1937

1. Name Mrs. Maggie Lay Johnson Williamson.

2. Post Office Address Mrs. Maggie L. Williamson.

3. Residence address (or location) Loco, Stephens County, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 15 Year 1863.

5. Place of birth Montague County, Texas.

6. Name of Father William J. Johnson. Place of birth Alabama.

Other information about father Typical Texas cowboy.

7. Name of Mother Georgia Bohanan Johnson Place of birth Texas.

Other information about mother Her father died in the Indian

Territory during the Civil War.

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 .

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Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
Dec. 22, 1937.

An Interview With Maggie Williamson,
Loco, Stephens County.

I was born in Montague County, Texas, April 18, 1883. My father, William Claud Johnson, was born in Alabama but he was of the typical Texas cowboy type, happy, jolly, a friend to everybody and enjoyed nothing more than playing the fiddle. My mother, Georgia Ann Bohanan Johnson, was a native of Texas as were her people before her. Her father, George Bohanan, died some months before her birth while in military service at some place in the Indian Territory during the Civil War. His memory was kept fresh in the minds of the family by the fact that Grandmother and Step-Grandfather Curry never grew tired of relating the story of Grandfather George Bohanan and his messmate Step-Grandfather Curry going with their command to the Indian Territory in time of the Civil War. Grandfather Bohanan received a serious wound and before he had recovered from the wound he contracted pneumonia from exposure, and knew he was going to die and thought of his family left down in Texas.

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to contend with those terrible conditions which existed on the frontier. His messmate understood and promised him that if he was fortunate enough to return to Texas that he would take care of Grandfather's wife and children. Grandmother would tell us of the day when he came riding up to her home leading Grandfather's horse packed with his equipment and told her that Grandfather had died somewhere in the Indian Territory and had been buried there. We never knew the place for it was all in the wild then. His messmate kept his promise and sometime later married my grandmother, the widow of George Bohanan, and did a father's part by her children and all the family. I loved him as Grandfather Gurry.

My parents moved our family to the Indian Territory in 1868 and settled one and one-half miles south of the present town of Loco in Stephens County. It was not a country or town either then.

My father's brothers, Sidney, Lee, Marion and John, together with their mother and sister Lynda had come through from Alabama some two or three years before and had settled at the place as they could get all the land

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from the Indians that they wanted for simply clearing it up and putting it into cultivation. They came down into Texas and wanted to move Father and Mother up to the Territory. Families usually settled in groups, for mutual protection and benefit in those days, and there were so few white people in the country that one family alone did not have a very happy life.

Father let his brothers take one team of oxen and a wagon and a number of cattle on for him, and then as soon as he and Mother could get things ready, they went.

They had two covered wagons, one a large old fashioned ox wagon which was built of heavy timber and was low on the ground. The wagon bed was home-made, then above it was built an overjet that extended out over the wheels. In the wagon bed were packed all kinds of household goods as long as it would hold anything, then above in the overjet were packed our beds and this was where we children could lie down while traveling. We had a tent which we usually stretched at night. Mother drove this team of oxen all the way and they were so well trained that there were no lines at all on them, and

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Mother guided them by talking to them and by the use of a whip. We kept these old oxen for many years and loved them. Father drove the wagon with the team of mules and they were not so safe as the oxen. The grass was so high that Mother was constantly warning us children about following Father out into it and becoming lost. The timber was thick and the roads were only wagon ruts if there were any tracks at all.

When we reached our destination, the cattle rustlers had stolen most all of the cattle, but Father did not try to find them as the displeasure of the outlaws was something to fear and cattle were cheap anyway. He always took things easy but for many years Mother cried a great deal and then I wondered "Why" but now I know it was the hardships she had to endure and the fear she felt for her children.

For years we never had a doctor in our family; there was none near and we did not need any for we were usually well. Mother gathered a large bag full of peach tree leaves before we left Texas, for medicine, as there were no peach trees in **this** part of the country

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then. These leaves were used for sick stomach and for poultices. Father had to go back to Nocona, Texas, for all our groceries that we had to buy and these trips were not made often.

For lights in the living room we used the fireplace in the winter. The house was built of logs which Father and his brothers cut on the land and the fireplace was built of rocks that they hauled. In the kitchen and when we needed light in the summer, we used grease lamps, that is, melted tallow was put into a flat pan, then a piece of cloth was twisted into a hard string and soaked in the grease and one end of the string was left above the grease and set on fire. This was the kind of light used by almost everybody as we could not have coal oil to burn as we did in Texas. Mother always tried to keep a little coal oil to use in case some of us children had the croup or a bad cold.

We lived in the wagons and in the tent until the house was built. Then they built large corrals as near the house as possible and kept all the stock in

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them except when they were being herded. These corrals were of long posts set several feet in the ground very close together and several feet high. The stables opened into these and the gate which was locked at night was near the house. This was all done to keep the rustlers from stealing the stock. Our people never had any trouble with the Indians at all; the women and children feared them, but the men dealt very kindly and honestly with them and we had no trouble.

When some article such as table, chair or bedstead was needed, Father would go to the woods and cut some timber and make it, or if he needed a wagon-bow or an ox-yoke he would make it and if a wagon wheel broke, the wood of the bois d'arc would make a fine new one. We did not have a well of good water at our house and for years all the water we had was hauled from a well one and a half miles away. When Father did not have time to haul it in the big wagon, we children hauled it through the woods in small quantities, in a little wagon.

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Our entertainment was among ourselves and doing our work. We never thought of going away from home and some years later when a school was started, it was in a log house with split log benches, with holes bored in them, with wooden pegs for legs and our books were Webster's Blue Backed Speller, with slate and pencils, that Grandfather Curry in Texas gave to us. It was a subscription school.

My parents reared nine children at this place, all to be grown and the first one to pass away died in October 1937. I married Thomas Bright Williamson at this place and with the exception of only two years, when we lived at Duncan, we have continued to live at Loco which is just one and one half miles from Father's old home place. My husband passed away in 1937 and I am living in my home in Loco.

I have seen the country develop from ox wagons to automobiles, from wagon ruts to paved highways and from grease lights to gas and electricity.