

WINTERS, SARAH FRANCIS HOWARD

INTERVIEW

4979

INDEX CARDS:

Chickasaw Nation
Smith Paul
Farming
Greer County
Ranching

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

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.

This report made on (date) July 16, 1937. 193

1. Name Mrs. Sarah Francis Howard Winters.

2. Post Office Address Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route 4, Hobart, Kiowa County.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 14 Year 1861.

5. Place of birth Montgomery County, Missouri.

6. Name of Father Cornelius Howard. Place of birth Missouri.

Other information about father A Pauls Valley farmer 1872.

7. Name of Mother Mary Greenwell Howard. Place of birth Missouri.

Other information about mother Nothing given.

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for instructions and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary, and refer firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

Ethel B. Tackitt,
Interviewer.

An Interview with Mrs. Sarah
Francis Howard, Hobart, Kiowa
County, Oklahoma, Route 4....

I was born in Montgomery County, Missouri, November
14, 1861. My parents were Cornelious Howard and Mary
Greenwell Howard, both natives of Missouri.

Our family moved to the Indian Territory in the year
1875 and settled near the present town of Pauls Valley which
was at that time only a farm covering many acres.

It was under the control of squawmen, that is, white men
who had married Indian women.

Father farmed on land owned by Jinks Maxfield. There
were a thousand acres in his farm.

Smith Paul, for whom the valley was named, ^{was} a white man
who had come with the Chickasaw Indians when they were moved
into the Territory, and he controlled an enormous amount of
land.

We later moved onto the south side of Washita River and
rented land from a woman by the name of Harriet Hester. She
was half white and half Choctaw Indian. Her husband, a white
man, Joe Hester, had been killed by a United States deputy
marshal, it was said, in a whiskey raid.

Cotton and corn were the principal crops raised on the

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farm. Most of the corn was sold to Fort Sill as well as some garden vegetables which we raised.

We took our corn to the water-mill on Rock Creek when we wanted it ground. The mill-race was a half mile long and the water poured a fall of several feet onto the big wheel that gave the power.

A cotton gin was also run by this water power and people brought their corn and cotton from miles around to this cotton gin.

The long mill-race and the tall trees growing around made it one of the most beautiful places I ever saw.

There was a steam cotton gin built east of Pauls Valley but we never went there.

For a long time, all the fences were built of rails and I can well remember the first barbed wire fence I ever saw. It was a pasture fence belonging to Jim Gardner and on the top was wire all around the fence and they had to tie a rail to keep the stock from injuring themselves by running into the wire, because the stock was like me, they had never seen a wire fence and did not know it would cut them.

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The country at that time was under martial law as the Indian Tribal law was no longer in force.

I remember Sam Paul very well. He was killed by his own son Joe Paul.

I married my husband, John W. Winters, who was born in 1852, and came to the Indian Territory in 1872. He lived near Fort Gibson but later came to Pauls Valley.

In April of 1889, we, my husband and I, started to Groer County, where we wanted to get land of our own and make a home.

I remember meeting numbers and numbers of people who were on their way to make the run into old Oklahoma. They were in buggies, wagons of all kinds and many were on horseback.

On April 19, 1889, we settled on our claim, which is four and one-half miles east and two miles north of the present town of Blair in Jackson County.

There was no such place as Blair then. It was all in a big cow range. Tom Jones, whose brand was W E T, controlled thirty-six sections. T. Witten and Ben Smith each owned two or three thousand head of cattle and the mule shoe (S) ranch,

of which Uncle Billie Nay was boss was a few miles west of us.

We built a dugout on White Oak Hollow and lived in it for fifteen years. All of our supplies we hauled from Vernon, Texas, in a wagon.

There was a little school house a few miles east of us on Cottonwood Branch. Here we had church. A Methodist Minister by the name of Morgan had a regular appointment.

Our children went to school there and the first teacher was a man by the name of Baley.

The community had a picnic at this school house the first summer we were in Groer and I believe it was the best picnic I ever attended. I met and got acquainted with all the neighbors that day. There were only a few families.

The McElroys, Smiths, Inklebargers, Casteels, Limpkins, Zinns, Jowetts, and my father's family, who were named Howard.

The entertainment was only a basket dinner and then different ones made talks about the country and their hopes and plans for the future.

Our first crops were of feed for the stock, sweet potatoes, beans and peas.

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S. J. Jones was the first person in our community to plant cotton and there was much speculation as to whether cotton would grow in the country and if ^{it} should grow, few persons thought it would have time to mature on account of the early cold.

Cotton did grow and the cotton land is now one of the best producing sections of Oklahoma.

I have lived on this farm for we proved up on our claim, under the law of Texas Territory and under the laws of the State of Oklahoma. I have lived in Greer County which is now Jackson County all my life. I have never moved from the same spot on which the first dugout was built in the year 1889.

I yet own the farm but my husband, John W. Winters, passed away several years ago.