

MILLER, JESS (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

#4524

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for OklahomaField Worker's name Ruth Lee GamblinThis report made on (date) June 17, 19371. Name Mrs. Jess Miller2. Post Office Address Frederick, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) 7 miles west of Frederick4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 2 Year 18765. Place of birth Texas6. Name of Father Sam Johnson Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4.

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Ruth Lee Gamblin,
Interviewer.
June 17, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Jess Miller
Frederick, Oklahoma.
Born September 2, 1876.
Father-Sam Johnson

I was born in Texas. My parents' names were Mr. and Mrs. Sam Johnson. I was born in 1876. I was married to Mr. Jess Miller in 1897 and we continued to live in Texas until 1901.

My husband did not draw any land but a neighbor of ours by the name of Willie Midex came to the Territory and drew a claim and as he was not married he came back to Texas and asked us to come and live on the claim and we did.

We had two children at that time so my husband, myself and children packed our wagon and started on our journey. We did not have very much furniture to move and Mr. Midex said he would manage for furniture for us just as soon as he could. We were seventeen days making the trip. We did not try to travel fast.

My husband did not know just how we would cross the river so we went to Vernon, Texas, and then bought

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a few groceries and supplies as they said that would be the only place close for us to trade. We then came on to the river and crossed at what was Doan's Crossing. We did not have any trouble with quicksand because the river was so dry; however, the dry sand was very bad. At that time and several years later the farmers would put straw on the roads so that the wagons could travel.

In those days they had fire guards at short distances apart; the way they did this was to break the sod or make big ditches far apart so they would not have prairie fires. Anyway we followed a fire guard after we came across the river to the place where we were supposed to live.

We lived in a tent for about four months. We arrived at the claim just three days before Christmas so our first Christmas dinner was in a tent. We did not have a large table and as we had company we ate on the dirt floor. We placed our table cloth made of sacks on the floor and then spread our Christmas dinner. We did not have a dinner like we have now.

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We did not have cows so we had water bread; we also did not have chickens but that day we had wild turkey.

In those days we had very few neighbors and all you could see was just a few tents and prairie grass.

My husband and a neighbor bought a cottonwood tree, giving \$2.00 for it, but for most of our wood, we went to the river. We had all the wood we could use through the winter. From the cottonwood tree we got 110 posts.

We had to go four miles for our water the first three years. We would get our water barrel, keg and jugs full, and this way we would get water almost every two days; at that time the water was not very good.

It was so dry the first year that we did not raise anything but the second year we had rain and good crops, also good gardens. we had to go to Vernon after the seed.

When my husband had to go Vernon after supplies I would always hang a lantern on top of our dugout so that he could find his way home.

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Dr. Roberts was about the only doctor close at that time. He kept a good supply of medicine on hand at that time. He was on the go night and day and many times he would call on some lady to go help him, which I did very often.

Each Sunday all the neighbors would gather for Sunday School. We also had parties every few nights.

We lived on this farm for seventeen years and then moved on another farm to live with my daughter. My husband died in 1929 and I now make my home with my daughter. I saw this country build up and people might think now that they have hard times but they are nothing like the early days.