

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
MOORE, W. N. INTERVIEW

4321

Field Worker's name Ida A. Merwin

This report made on (date) June 3 1937

1. Name W.N. Moore

2. Post Office Address Morrison, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) one quarter mile west and quarter mile south of Morrison

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 7 Year 1862

5. Place of birth Pana, Ill.

6. Name of Father John B. Moore Place of birth Penn.

Other information about father Newsboy in childhood--Railroader later

7. Name of Mother Susan (Apple) Moore Place of birth Ohio

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 _____.

MOORE, W. N. INTERVIEW

Experiences of W. N. Moore
Morrison, Oklahoma

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Mr. Moore is almost seventy-five years old, and was one of the pioneers, who made the run in 1893. His father's name was John B. Moore and he was born in Pennsylvania. I don't know the date of his birth nor his death. He was a newsboy in childhood, and then entered railroad work at St. Louis, Mo. He worked as a conductor and yard master and died at St. Louis and is buried there. His mother's name was Susan (Apple) Moore. She was born in Ohio. I don't know date of birth nor death but she is buried at Vancouver, Washington,

Mr. Moore states his father died when he was only eleven years old, and he then went to live with his grandfather, at Waukomis, Ill. At the age of thirteen left there and went to Wichita, Kansas, and began caring for himself. Later he went to Mo. where he remained several years, then he went to Washington. After a few years he went to Como, Colorado, and from there came to Oklahoma, in 1893. He made the run to secure a farm, staking and proving up on one, located twelve miles east of Perry. He still owns this farm. His statement is as follows; I left Como, Colorado, accompanied by Pat Harding and J. G. Carter. (both now dead). We went to Pittsburg, Kansas, arriving August 23, 1893, and there we bought means of transportation to make the run into Oklahoma. I bought a spotted pony and a buggy.

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I named the pony, Pony Bill.

We went from there to Fairland, Oklahoma, which was in the Indian Territory, and from there we went to Tulsa. At that time Tulsa consisted of a depot and a few other buildings. From there we went to Cushing which was a very small town at that time, and on to Ingalls, which consisted of three or four buildings. This place was all shot to pieces as the Federal officers had cornered a band of outlaws there the day before and had had quite a gun battle. We arrived at Stillwater, Sept. 11, 1893, and set camp and waited for the day of the Run. We waited in line thirty six hours to secure a permit to enter the race.

On the morning of Sept. 16, 1893, I got in position three miles north of Stillwater. At twelve o'clock we started. I was riding Pony Bill. When we reached Long Branch Creek, there were quite a few who were unable to cross, as there were only a few cow trails. I happened to be near one and swerved into it and crossed to the north side. Only a few had crossed, so we went to the north until we saw the Government Corner stone. I staked my claim at twelve forty-three, making the nine miles in forty three minutes. I still own the farm and it is located twelve miles east of Perry, Oklahoma, Highway 64, twelve miles north of Stillwater. It corners the highways that cross at that point now known as "Bill's corner".

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On Sept. 20, I went to Perry to file on my claim, but there were so many in line I could not get a chance then, and it was six weeks before I got to file.

A Mr. Autry built a store at the place where Morrison is now located. This store was used as the post office, and was named Autry. It was located just south of where the school house now stands. Later Mr. Autry sold out to a Mr. Morrison. The mail and passengers were carried by a stage coach, operating between Perry and Pawnee. The Frisco railroad was built in 1902 or 1903, I don't remember the exact date. After that several buildings were built nearer the railroad and the name was changed to Morrison. The road leading east from Perry turned north at a point six miles east of Perry, then east to the small town of Autry.

One day as I needed to go to Autry for some supplies and the mail, I hitched Pony Bill to the buggy, threw in a spade and started east from my place. I followed the section line and when I came to a place we could not cross I spaded until the pony could take the buggy through. I angled across about the same angle that the highway 64 now runs. The next day one of the neighbors, Mr. Harding, followed the same trail, thus opening the road from a point three

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miles west of Autry, now known as Morrison, Oklahoma. My first house was built of cotton wood boards, secured at a saw mill on the farm. This farm is known as the Boyer farm now. The house was ten feet by twelve feet.

A Methodist Episcopal church was built on the same location where the Methodist Episcopal church in Morrison now stands. It was built before the railroad was laid from Tulsa to Enid, but don't know the exact date. The Baptist and Christian Churches were built later.

In the spring of 1895 I assisted in surveying the north half of Auburn township. This was necessary, as there was a dispute as to the section lines.

We worked quite hard to build homes, schools and churches in this community. My first crop was in 1894, and was ten acres of kaffir corn which made three bushels to the acre. I plowed the same ten acres and sowed it in wheat in the fall of 1894.

When the crop's yield was to be marketed some farmers as far east as Jennings, Oklahoma, would haul their grain to Ferry, Oklahoma. There was no bridge nor ferry on the Arkansas River, and they could not always ford the river to go to Tulsa.

The neighbors would club together and grind kaffir corn for flour for the Bread, which we would make into

biscuits and pancakes.

The latch string of the doors always hung on the outside. One day when I came in from work I found a note, like this, "I stopped and cooked my dinner, and I used some of your grease to cook my potatoes. My name is Bill Jackson. I live in Jennings, and if you ever come that way come and see me". We usually had dry salt meat, potatoes, and bread, biscuits or pancakes made from kaffir flour for our food. Once a man stopped and stayed all night at my place. He had some syrup, cheese and cookies. That with my potatoes, meat and bread made a real feast.

During the early days a store was built across the road from where the O.G. & E. station is now located. This was run by the Van Deventer brothers, and was called "Day Town". It changed hands several times, then was finally discontinued. The people were very congenial and would gather for miles for parties and dances, and when the work was heavy they would have gatherings on Sunday at the different homes. All seemed to enjoy themselves amid the hardships.