

CROTZER, ~~EDNA~~

INTERVIEW

7383

CROTZER, EMMA (MRS.). INTERVIEW.

#7383

Interview with Mrs. Emma Crotzer
Fairland, Oklahoma
By Field Worker, Nannie Lee Burns
August 31, 1937

SATURDAY'S BROTHER.

My grandfather was John Vann, a Cherokee, born in Georgia.

My father was James Denton Vann, born in Tennessee.

My mother was Rose Ann Keithart, born in Tennessee.

My father's half brothers were Joe Vann and Saturday Vann and they had a sister Mary, all born in the Indian Territory.

My father and mother were married in Tennessee.

GRANDFATHER VANN.

My grandfather Vann was an interpreter for the Cherokees and made trips with them to different places.

He was a rich man and had a fine home in Tennessee on the river. At first, his young wife insisted on going with him and went one trip with

him and did not like the way they had to go and the people that she was among so after that when Grandfather had to go on trips she would not go with him so he got a young Cherokee girl to stay with his wife when he was away from home.

He made a trip with the Cherokees to the Indian Territory and after his return began to make preparations to move his wife and small son, afterward my father, to Oklahoma then the Indian Territory with him but his wife remembering the experience that she had had on that early trip with her husband refused to come to this country. Grandfather had agreed and also he wanted to come so he left his young wife and son there in the home and came with his tribe on the Trail of Tears. Afraid that his father would try to take their young son with him, the young woman who afterwards became my grandmother took the child in her arms and ran upstairs with him and with the boy in her arms

3

watched her husband leave their home. I remember now her name was Martha Denton before she married Grandfather.

MY FATHER.

My father grew to manhood and married Rose Anne Keithcart who afterward became my mother in Tennessee and after their first two children were born they moved to Georgia. Here near Springplace, I was born April 29, 1864. We lived here till I was six years old when Father decided to follow his people to what was then Indian Territory.

CIVIL WAR DAYS.

Father was a tanner by trade. He and his family lived near Springplace during the war and Father went into the army but the family did not suffer so much from the Northern opposing army that far South as people did farther North. Mother had her old mare whose name was "Kit" stolen twice

4

but each time she would go to the headquarters and get her back. Father's partner, in the tanning business, John Johnson, was called to the door one night and shot and killed after he had been asked for whiskey.

There was in that region, as in all other parts of the country I suppose, some men who did not join the army but who robbed and stole whenever they found anything that they wanted. After the soldiers returned and learned what they had been doing during their absence, they took the law into their own hands and punished these thieves. There was one family that had been stealing sheep and the men when they returned from the war took the men of that family and drowned them.

Father farmed some after the death of his partner and after the close of the war.

OUR NEXT HOME.

As I said when I was six, my father and some other families decided to join their kinsmen in this country

so several families including the families of John Adair, Doc Harrison, King Whetzel, and others whom I do not remember and Joe Kincaid, a single man started. My father was driving four oxen to an ox wagon. Their traveling was slow but not so bad as was the traveling of those who had first come this way many years before as now there were roads, not good ones, but they were roads, fords and more bridges.

When we reached Kentucky, my grandmother who was with our family became too ill to travel farther, so Father was compelled to stop there with his family, letting his friends come on without him.

We lived here till I was ten years old. During this time my grandmother died and the thing I remember best about her are the big aprons that she used to wear. While we lived in Kentucky Father worked at the tanning trade. Hearing of the new home occasionally and knowing that his father was in it and that he had some half-brothers here in Indian Territory,

he decided to come to them. After coming here his father, my grandfather, had married again, this time to a fullblood Cherokee and they had three children. They were Joe, Saturday and Mary.

THE HOME IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY.

So this time, my parents started in an ox wagon drawn by four oxen and a buggy drawn by a horse. There were father, mother, us eight children, Eliza, John, Mollie, David, Mattie, Sarah Ann, Jimmie and myself, Emma Virginia Lee.

We were four weeks on the road from Kentucky and would stop on the road and rest and do our washings in the streams that we crossed.

We stopped at Neosho, Missouri, and from there after Father made some inquiries about his half-brothers we came on to Muskrat's Mill where Father left the family and went to find his brothers.

He found them near Tahlequah and when he had found them, of course they did not know him but they had heard their father say that he had left a small son back in Tennessee so one of them asked my father,

7

who was my grandfather and they knowing him by that name were satisfied and wanted him to locate near them so Father rented a small place two miles from Mayesville. So Father came back to us and after four weeks at Muskrat's Mill moved his family to this place.

HOME LIFE.

There had been a good house here with a double rock chimney but the house had burned and another smaller house had been built in front of the chimney. Father sold one yoke of oxen and bought a cow and some hogs for the family. Things were high too, calico was a dollar a yard. This is the reason that we women of those days had to spin the thread and weave our clothes.

We did not have the nice things that people have nowadays. I have heard Mother say that Brother Dave's cradle was a hollow horse trough which she lined and placed on two blocks. This she would rock with her foot as she knitted or sewed.

We children walked two and a half miles to school and would leave home before the sun was up in the morning. My sister Mattie liked to go to school and would hurry the rest of us along. I was not so anxious to get to school myself. My brother Dave began to hire out and received from twelve to fifteen dollars per month and he saved his money and when he married he had four hundred dollars that he had saved.

Father did well in the new country and after two years he bought sixty acres near here and here we lived for the next ten years.

Here, we had our fruit, hogs, cattle and sheep and did well. For winter we dried apples, peaches, beans, peas, corn and pumpkins. We had our hogs but wild game was plentiful and we could have different meat whenever we wanted it.

Here, too, we had found our old friends and neighbors who had come on to this country when Father had stopped in Kentucky. Father's brother, Saturday,

was killed by his son-in-law, he was knocked in the head with an ax. His brother Joe left one girl, Nan, whom my father raised.

My brother Dave had settled south and east of Fairland where he now lives and after all were gone from home but myself and my cousin Nannie, Father sold out and we came here and at first we lived at my brother's.

This was on the prairie and the first winter we nearly froze. Father died fifty-one years ago at Dave's.

MARRIAGE.

May 24, 1878, I married William Crotzer a descendant of the Pennsylvania Dutch. He was born in Terra Haute, Indiana, August 15, 1857. He had come to Neosho, Missouri, with his parents when he was ten years old and camped there as his father was on the construction gang that was building the Frisco Railroad into the Indian Territory. We settled near Ogheechee and lived there two years and then we moved to our home one

10

mile south of Fairland where we raised our family of eight children. They were Rosa, Stella, Effie, Ed, Carl, Lucile, Willie and Nellie.

My husband died at our home on September 28, 1910, and later I moved to Fairland where I have continued to live.

MOTHER.

After Father died, Mother purchased the place just west of Ogeeshee where the Overacre family now lives and lived there several years. She died at the age of eighty years at Uvalde, Texas.