

DAVIS, GEORGE B. (MRS.) INTERVIEW #8813

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

DAVIS, GEORGE B. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

8813

Field Worker's name Virgil Coursey

This report made on (date) October 7 1937

1. Name Mrs. George B. Davis

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 620 East Broadway

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 29 Year 1887

5. Place of birth Illinois

6. Name of Father S.J. Hendrix Place of birth Illinois

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Lucy Shardon Place of birth St. Louis, Missouri.

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 _____

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Virgil Coursey,
Interviewer,
October 7, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. George B. Davis,
Altus, Oklahoma.

Our family moved from Le Roy, Illinois, to Oklahoma in 1900. We settled at Thomas. We chartered a car and brought all our household goods, horses and farming implements. There were four girls and Father and Mother. I was thirteen years of age. Mr. Thomas ran a store and post office at Thomas. About one year after we moved there the town was moved to its present location.

My father found kaffir corn would do well in dry weather and raised it quite extensively. After a few years he began to raise wheat. We had never seen cotton and thought it was a most beautiful crop. Thomas was the place where many Indians received their allotment of Government money, and they spent quite a good deal of money there. Occasionally the white people gave the Indians a beef to dance for them. The Indians would ride a beef down and beat it to death. They ate the meat raw or roasted it over coals.

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The choir of the United Brethren Church was invited to sing at the funeral of Indian Chief Lowland Crain, I was a member of that choir. At the conclusion of the service all white people were requested to leave so that the burial and subsequent ceremonies could be attended only by Indians. Next day orange juice and other things to eat and drink were found on the chief's grave. These foods were presumably placed there to sustain the soul of the departed one until it reached its final resting place.

Our main interest outside of the home was our choir work with the church. We loved singing and choir practice. We also enjoyed hayrides in the moonlight, watermelon parties and picnics. When I was seventeen years old I began to teach school. I had about an eighth grade education and held a third grade certificate. Teachers were scarce and anyone having a certificate and a willingness to teach was in demand. I received \$30.00 a month for a three months term. My board and lodging cost me \$17.00 a month and I stayed with a family in which there were

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seven children and we all lived in two rooms. The school was eleven miles from my home and I was so homesick that I spent the remainder of my salary hiring rigs to take me home over the week ends. I had pupils from mere beginners to pupils seventeen and eighteen years of age and I was considered a good teacher. The year previous a man had taught who did not get along with the pupils any too well, and if the weather was cloudy or he was in the least indisposed, he never showed up for school. Then too, I taught the children to march into the school room. The boys were instructed to remove their hats in the house and to raise their hats when they met a lady, and were taught other manly courtesies. This instruction in deportment went over big with the mothers. The next year I taught in a district north of this one. It was a larger and much more desirable school. The contract called for a six month school with the privilege of an additional month. I inquired what the privilege of an additional month meant and was informed that, if at the end of the six months everyone was satisfied and wanted to

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continue, the school would continue another month.

I went to school in the summers and soon got a first grade certificate and I taught for thirteen years. The Oklahoma course of study used in those days was a good one in that it was thorough. There was quite a bit of memory work -at least one complete poem was memorized each month. At regular times the teacher received a list of questions in a sealed envelope. This envelope was opened in the presence of the pupils and everyone had to pass this examination.

In 1921 I was married to Mr. Davis, a native of Mississippi. We lived one year at Eldorado and then came to Altus. Mr. Davis has been active in the cotton business ever since.