

MOORE, EDGAR INTERVIEW.

#7073

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

Field Worker's name Gomer Gower

This report made on (date) July 22 1937

1. Name Edgar Moore (Edgar A. Moore)

2. Post Office Address Spiro Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 7 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Scullyville

Scullyville, County, Choctaw Nation Indian Territory.

6. Name of Father Lyman Moore Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father 3/4 Creek Indian

7. Name of Mother Fannie Eugenia Moore Place of birth Alabama

Other information about mother Choctaw

Arrived at Fort Coffee in 1849

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 _____.

BIOGRAPHY AND REMINISCENCES OF
Edgar Moore, Spiro, Okla.
July 20, 1937

Mr. Moore, the subject of this sketch, was born at Scullyville on January 7th 1873, of parents who, when quite young, were brought from Alabama to the Indian Territory in compliance with the terms of the treaty made with the Federal Government at Dancing Rabbit Creek council grounds on September 27th, 1830, on the part of the Choctaw Indians and the treaty made on March 24, 1832, on the part of the Creek Indians at Washington, D. C.

He attended the community school at Scullyville until he reached the age of fourteen years. Afterwards he was a pupil at Spencer Academy, near Goodland, and then he was selected as one of a group of fifteen young men to attend Roanoke College at Salem, Virginia, where after one year, he was transferred to the Kemper Military Academy at Booneville, Missouri, and where Judge D. C. McCurtain, now in the legal department of the Indian Service at Washington D. C.; Reford Bond, now Chairman of the State Corporation Commission, and J. B. McAlester, attended at the same time.

This, indeed is a remarkable accomplishment when it is considered his father, Lyman Moore, died when he

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was scarcely eight years of age, and reflects honor and credit upon his mother who was, before her marriage, a member of the Moncrief family, for her maternal solicitation for the education of her children in the absence through death, of her life mate. She was permitted by Divine Providence to live to the ripe old age of eighty-nine years, and was the mother of seven children, Edgar A., Lyman R., Louis O., (now dead), Herbert M., Napoleon B., Gertrude (now Mrs. Bowman), and Lena (now Mrs. Smith).

He was a member of the first legislature and served as a member by appointment of William H. Murray, who was then Speaker of the House, of the Squirrel Rifle Brigade.

With the exception of the years 1903-1904 he has been a member, and still is, of the Choctaw Council. A membership which he has enjoyed since its institution and of which he feels justly proud.

The land holdings of the Moore family, before allotments were made embraced the area now occupied by the city of Spiro. With rare foresight the two brothers had a town-

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site platted on this land and sold lots contingent upon the approval of the Townsite Commission. The location of the townsite together with its provision for streets of adequate width as shown by the plat was quickly approved by the Townsite Commission, and the contingent sales were made bonafide and in conformity with the townsite regulations. Thus the beautiful little city of Spiro was born, and although it has not attained note as an industrial centre, it has enjoyed a brisk agricultural trade due to its location in an exceedingly rich farming and stockraising area.

Mr. Moore, aside from his activities in State and Tribal affairs, has devoted his life to stockraising and overseeing of his vast farm interests.

His grandfather Moncrief was tragically killed and his body burned at the time of a negro uprising which occurred near Scullyville about 1860 or 1861. This uprising was instigated by an overseer, in the employ of Mr. Moncrief, who in reality was a northern sympathizer. After the uprising, with its tragic result, the overseer

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took the slaves out of the Choctaw Nation, disposed of them and never returned. In another uprising which occurred about the same time, three brothers, Joseph, Robert and Dave Hall, were brutally murdered by the slaves owned by them, under the leadership of another faithless overseer employed by the Hall family. However in this case, the traitorous overseer was in turn killed by a surviving brother who was assisted by one of the slaves who had heroically refused to join in the uprising.

During the turbulent years of the Civil War many of the families who owned slaves and plantations in Scullyville County went as refugees to Doaksville, and in some instances to Clarksville, Texas, taking the slaves with them.

At the close of the Civil War, the negroes who had been scattered in the confusing conditions attendant on the prosecution of the war, in many instances returned to the homes of their former owners and insisted on being cared for in the same manner as that in which they had been cared for before their freedom.

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It is significant that most, if not all, of the slaves in all the area lying north of the Kiamichi Mountains and south of the Arkansas River were owned by plantation owners having possessions in the Arkansas and Poteau River bottoms, and that these slaves were owned in the main by intermarried whites or mixed blood Indians, while the fullblood Indians selected their homesites on the vast prairies where game was more plentiful. Jonico Prairie, so-called by reason of its first settler being John Jonico, a fullblood Choctaw Indian, was noted for its abundance of game and excellent fishing streams. The Poteau River is its eastern boundary, while on its south side Brazil Creek traverses it for several miles.

What a paradise for the nimrod and the angler. The present village of Panama is located on its eastern side, while it extends westward into Haskell County. Its north and south extent is approximately fifteen miles. Small wonder the fullblood Choctaws saw in this a realization of their dreams; a return to the life of their forefathers in which for unnumbered centuries they had lived by the chase. One can mentally picture their

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extreme happiness and contentment amid such surroundings, and which they could still be enjoying had the whites not thrust their unwelcome presence into their midst.

As a relic of those bygone days, Mr. Moore has in his possession a treasure in the form of a letter which was written by his paternal grandmother, dated at Micco Creek Nation, West of Arkansas to her son, (his father), Lyman Moore, while he attended school at Cane Hill, Arkansas, admonishing and pleading with him to shun evil companions while he was thus unavoidably deprived of her personal care and direction. Time has obliterated the date, however since he was born in 1837, it may reasonably be presumed it was written somewhere between the years 1850 and 1855.

A perusal of this letter will set at ease all misgivings we may have as to the intellectual attainments of the Indians of that period who had been favored with educational advantages. It fairly breathes maternal love; couched in language so beautiful and expressive

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that one is led to believe that the communion of the Most High was very, very near when it was written. The chirography, too, is excellent and attractive, having a similarity to both the Old English Script and the Spenserian types of handwriting. A copy of this letter may possibly be in the archives of the Historical Society, as the original was sent to it as historical matter and afterwards it was returned to Mr. Moore, who doubtless receives much inspiration from the angelic thoughts expressed by its author.

Mr. Moore, entering upon young manhood in the early nineties, has not only personally experienced the epochal changes which have been brought about since that period, but has been highly instrumental in directing the course of these changes on through the years. Truly a type of citizen of which Oklahoma, his native state, may well feel proud.