

DODSON, SALLIE C.

INTERVIEW

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

DODSON, SALLIE C. INTERVIEW 9553

Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland,

This report made on (date) December 28, 193 7

1. Name Mrs. Sallie C. Dodson,
2. Post Office Address Victory, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) One mile north and two miles west.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 16 Year 1866
5. Place of birth Tennessee

6. Name of Father S. C. Follis, Place of birth Virginia

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Williamson Place of birth Virginia

Other information about ~~mother~~ father. Blacksmith.

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 7

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Zadiee B. Bland,
Journalist,
December 28, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Sallie C. Dodson,
Victory, Oklahoma.

I have lived for the past forty years in and around Creta; the last twenty years in the Aaron community and we are moving now to a place one mile north and two miles west of Victory, where we will stay for the next year. We came to this part of the world to be near relatives. In my younger days if you had a bit of blood kin in your veins you had to meet once a year in a family reunion. It was usually during the Christmas week. I never wanted to come to Oklahoma. I was told if ever I did come north of the Red River and take one drink of this western water that I would be a native for life and it has proved that way, although I have rebelled a good many times and begged to go back East.

We loaded a car with two mules, our farm tools and household goods and had the car shipped to the nearest railroad point. I brought with me a sewing machine, a full bed room suite, an extra dresser with a mirror, and nice chairs and tables.

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My husband thought he had a farm rented when we came but we had the farm for the next year and since we arrived here in November it did not suit the people to vacate until January 1st, so we had to live in a tent for two months. I had five children, the youngest a little girl about six months old. I thought it the most desolate country I ever saw and began to cry as soon as I left the railroad station. When we were turned away from the house and the site pointed out to us where we might pitch our tent I started walking with my baby in my arms to the spot. It was across a creek called Boggy. We had to cross on some rocks. There were several in our crowd. My cousin kept reminding me of that saying, "Taste of the waters". I was on a rock in the middle of the stream so I stooped down to scoop up some of the water in my hand and take a drink and the baby and I both tumbled into the water. The water was not deep and I picked myself and baby up with the help of some of them but before I would wade out I was determined to taste the water. I never tasted such salty, bitter water in my life so I kept on crying and was I mad, too!

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The tent and the cook stove were set up and during the night the coldest north wind came up and the tent would billow out; I thought I would freeze. During the night (of course, I could not sleep), I called to Mr. Dodson "Get up quick, the dogs are surrounding us, they will come right into the tent and eat us all up." Mr. Dodson got up and turned back the flap of the tent and said, "Come here, Sallie, it is moonlight and you can see." I saw a dozen or more wolves slinking by, not twenty-five feet away. My! I was frightened. I never did get so I was not frightened and lonely when the wolves howled.

I never made bread without milk in my life. The first morning we had corn bread stirred up with water and a little butter for breakfast. My husband never did like corn bread any time but reached for the butter and said "Ugh! this is good." That was enough for me. I said "Yes, good for this country of the 'Honey Pond and Fritter tree' you have been telling me about." It was no use in trying, we could not use that Boggy Creek water. There was a tank about two miles away. My

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husband hitched the mules to the wagon, put three barrels into it and came and said to me, "Come, Sallie, get the children and go with me to haul water. It will be a new experience for us all and maybe you won't feel so badly." I took my six months old baby in my arms and the other children and went with him. We drove out into the tank and filled up our barrels and then spoke to the team to pull out. The team could not budge the wagon. We were stuck hard and fast in the bog. Mr. Dodson tried and tried to help the mules. The oldest boy got out and they pushed and pushed. Nothing doing, the wagon would not move. The oldest boy waded out. Mr. Dodson carried the rest of us out in his arms one at a time. When we were all on that cold dam around the tank sitting, freezing, Mr. Dodson went for his cousin to help him out of the bog. We got home at sundown with one-half barrel of water, hungry, cold, dirty, and mad all through. The children sided with their papa and wanted to stay so there was nothing I could do but cry and stay on if I wanted to be with my family. Mr. Dodson had to tote us out of more than one bog as the years went by.

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I had one little boy who was not stout and the doctor said he must eat meat. His father told him there was no meat in this country only pork. Pork did not sound good to Son so every morning for months he got out of bed and grabbing his stick horse he would say "Here I go back to the good country where I can eat meat."

I allowed maybe this country would improve on acquaintance. I hoped so, at least, for with wagging my baby around in my arms all the time and having the other children following me for I was afraid to leave them alone a minute for fear of the wolves, I was not a bit happy. I kept my children wrapped up different to what they do now or I am telling you we would all have frozen to death. We came mighty near doing it anyway.

Once after the children started to school--the two oldest--the others went with their father to the crossroads for something and there came up the biggest snow storm I had ever seen. It was so dark that I lighted a lantern so as to help them all find their

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way home, knowing pretty sure Pappy would go by for the children on his way home--which he did--but he got stuck in a snowdrift right close to a neighbor's home. The children all got out and went in there to spend the night but the oldest boy and his dad came on home to me knowing I was alone. The boy and his father got separated and the boy got home first. He reached the door and knocking on it he cried "Mammy, are you here and alive?" I opened the door. He threw his arms around me and said "Oh! thank God, thank God you are all right but I must go find Pappy, he is lost." He had only to go a little way until he found him. Pappy's hands were frozen and all the wild cattle for miles around drifted around the house for protection. There were forty head in my back yard and on my back porch.

When we got to where we could have a buggy and a surrey we felt like we were coming on, really getting into society. There was no social life except family reunions at Christmas time, fourth of July picnics, camp meetings in the Summer, and school entertainments every Friday. There were spelling matches and ciphering matches every Friday during

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the three months of school in which young and old took part alike. They were fun. Picnics and fish-fries in Summer, too; I never liked fish but usually trailed along for I did not wish to stay home alone. I do not know if tasting the salty, bitter water of Boggy kept me here or not but here I am and all my children are married and living around, so we are Oklahomans.