

MOORE, THOMAS DAVID

INTERVIEW

#8302

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

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Field Worker's name Jennie SelfridgeThis report made on (date) August 24, 19371. Name Thomas David Moore2. Post Office Address Aylesworth, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) East of town4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 25 Year 18645. Place of birth Joe Moore Crossing on Washita River 4 mi.  
west of Fort Washita in Chickasaw Nation.6. Name of Father Joe Moore Place of birth MississippiOther information about father Operated first large ferry on Washita7. Name of Mother Mary Rider Place of birth MissouriOther information about mother White woman

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Jennie Selfridge  
Field Worker  
August 24, 1937

Interview with Thomas David Moore  
Aylesworth, Oklahoma

I was born at Joe Moore crossing on the Washita river July 25, 1864. My father had settled at Buffalo Head, near Boggy Depot in the Choctaw Nation in 1843. His mother was Sophia Folsom, a relative of old Julius Folsom of Atoka.

My mother was Mary Rider a white woman. She was born in Missouri. Two of her brothers were killed during the Civil War by the Bushwhackers.

Father lived at Buffalo Head until after he was married and his first child was born, he then moved to what was later known as the Joe Moore Crossing on the Washita. There were eleven of us children and all were born at the Crossing except the oldest one. It was somewhere between 1850 and 1855 when we moved here.

The Joe Moore Crossing is four miles from Fort Washita, and one mile from the lime kiln where the lime was burned to build the fort. This kiln is still just as it was when they were taking out the lime and is about the size of an ordinary house. It has one large door into the entrance. They used

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wood to burn out the lime from the rock. Father put in the first large ferry on the Washita River and handled all of the traffic on the Fort Washita military road. He charged from 50¢ to \$1.00 for wagons, depending on the load, 10¢ for footmen, 25¢ for horsemen, and .10¢ a head for cattle.

I have seen cattle start coming by our house early in the morning and continue to pass all day. Sometimes Father would take the cattle across twenty-five head at a time. The cowmen would tie their horses to the ferry and let them swim across.

Governor Ben Burney lived at the place which is the site of the present town of Aylesworth. His home stood about one half mile east of the town. His father Dave Burney is buried in the Archard cemetery at Linn. His grave is covered with bricks which were hauled from Denison, Texas.

When Father moved to the Washita, Jim Christian of Woodville was operating the "44" ranch west of Linn.

I attended school at Harley Institute, and also a neighborhood school near Linn.

I have been married four times, and am the father of sixteen children all by my first wife. We had two sets of twins.

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Father was sheriff of Pickens County, Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory. He held this office until the government ruled that a Choctaw could not hold an office in the Chickasaw Nation.

The Comanches were very dangerous when we first settled on the Washita. They would come down every light of the moon to steal horses. After one of their raids one morning right arter seven o'clock, my mother went out and found a "breech-clout" decorated with beads and gold ornaments. She mailed it to her family in Missouri.

At that time people of this section had plenty. We had several hundred head of hogs and put up plenty of meat and lard every fall. I don't mean what people call plenty now. We put up lard by the hundred or gallons and meat in proportion. There was also plenty of wild game, including prairie chickens, deer, buffalo, squirrel, and wild turkey, also fish. Father could put out a trout line across the Washita at night, and catch several hundred pounds of fish and <sup>on</sup> one or two occasions they used a mule and single tree to drag the fish to the house.

During the war Father acted as "Patroller" to keep the

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negroes together. He received \$50.00 for every negro he returned to the owner. One time he got fourteen negroes out of the Fort Washita lime kiln and carried them back to Texas. A man came and told Father the negroes were using the kiln as a hiding place on their route in escaping from Texas to the north. They watched awhile and a little negro came into the kiln carrying a fawn, which he had killed nearby. Father got \$50.00 apiece for these negroes.

Sam Love and Willis Hawkins were prominent settlers in the Burney community. They married sisters. One night when father had gone over to Tisnomingo to take some prisoners, Hawkins and Love both got drunk, and Hawkins shot Love in the arm. A year later Hawkins went to the Burney home and Sam Love was there, and killed him. They are both buried in the Burney cemetery near Aylesworth.

This cemetery contains approximately one hundred and fifty graves and was established in 1860. I was there when Governor Ben Burney was buried. The I.O.O.F. Lodge from Denison, Texas, came over and conducted the funeral ceremony.

I am the oldest officer in Marshall county, having served twenty years as constable and the last six years as justice of the peace.