

MOORE, WINNIE BURCH

INTERVIEW

#9413

400

BIOGRAPHY WORKS PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

MOORE,

WINNIE BURCH.

INTERVIEW.

9413.

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.
This report made on (date) December 9, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Winnie Burch Moore.
2. Post Office Address Route 4, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) _____
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 16 Year 1882
5. Place of birth Fulton County, Arkansas.

6. Name of Father Mercer Burch Place of birth Georgia.
Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother Winnie Mathis Place of birth Arkansas.
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 5

MOORE, . . . WINNIE BURCH.

INTERVIEW.

9413.

Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
December 9, 1937.

Mrs. Winnie Burch Moore, Lone Wolf,
Kiowa County, Oklahoma relates her
Memories of pioneer family life in
Oklahoma from 1893 to 1937.

I was born in Fulton County, Arkansas, January 16, 1882.

My father, Mercer Burch, had served as a Confederate soldier through the Civil War. He was a native of Georgia and by trade a blacksmith.

My mother, Winnie Mathis Burch, was a native of Arkansas and my early memories of her, are watching her card cotton and wool bats and then spin them into thread and weave them into cloth of which she made all of our clothing.

In the Spring of 1893, we left our Arkansas home; we had lived in different counties of Northern Arkansas on farms, as there were not many towns in that part of the country then, and in a covered wagon drawn by a span of mules, we started for the Indian Territory. My parents had all their belongings in the wagon, together with my sister, myself and my brother.

I remember quite clearly driving through Oklahoma City. It was a town of tents and there were no large buildings

-2-

anywhere. There was much building and working on streets and houses but everything was new and in many places the roads were so cut up that our wagon could hardly get through and people were camped around everywhere.

Father did not want to stop and locate in that part of Oklahoma, as it had been opened in 1889 and the Iowa, Sac and Fox Nation had been opened in 1891 and much of the best land was under claim and there were so many people that every location seemed full, so we went on down into the Chickasaw Nation and located ten miles east of where the present town of Dunca is in what is now Stephens County where a man by the name of Harris had a cotton gin. This was on a tributary of Mud Creek.

Father leased some land from an Indian and he had only enough money left to buy some blacksmith's tools. We camped here and Father began cutting logs to build a house for us to live in. I was eleven years old but my sister and I helped him by taking an ax and trimming off the smaller limbs from the trees he cut down; then he would split the logs and we would help him to load them on the wagon or drag them to the place where we were building

MOORE, WINNIE BURCH.

INTERVIEW.

9413.

-3-

the two room log house. We helped him put the logs in place then chink and daub the cracks with mud and then he hauled rocks as there were plenty of them and built a fireplace and chimney. We had home-made doors and window shutters and a dirt floor. We cooked on the fireplace in big iron kettles. Some of them were hung over the fire and some of them were placed on fire coals which were dragged out on the big, flat, rock hearth. Our biscuits and corn-bread were baked in a round skillet now called a Dutch oven, with a heavy iron cover. We called these the "Skillet and lid" and all our baking was done in this skillet. The iron teakettle was used for heating all water and the big, heavy, iron cooking vessels were used on the fire. We cooked this way for two years before Father could save enough money to buy us a cooking stove.

We children helped Father cut logs and build a blacksmith shop near where Mr. Mart Harris had his gin and this was the first house to be built in the present town of Harrisburg in Stephens County.

Father worked at the shop but there was not a great deal of blacksmithing to be done and the people had so little money, the work was cheap.

-4-

Father and we cleared our land and planted what crops we could; then we children went out to chop cotton and help the neighbors wherever we could get jobs. For this work we had to take provisions and anything, which we could use as none of our neighbors had any money to pay us for work and we had to have things to eat and everybody took pay for his or her work in that way.

Mother did not bring our loom with us from Arkansas, but she did bring our spinning wheel and with it she spun thread and we knitted our own socks, stockings and mittens and many other articles. My parents were of the old style, truthful, hard working and honest people and we were brought up to be very religious; we went only to places near home, either walking or in the wagon. We visited among the neighbors who were all situated about like our family. Everybody was poor and had to work and was happy about it.

I was brought up to understand that if my father or mother told a thing, it was exactly that way and for a person to doubt the work of another was an insult.

For recreation, we had candy pullings among the neighbors and the candy was made of sorghum molasses,

MOORE, WINNIE BURCH.

INTERVIEW.

9413.

-5-

which was made at home from the sorghum grown on the farm.

We went to meetings, when a preacher happened along or when there was a protracted meeting somewhere near.

Much interest was taken in political matters as there was much discussion about the government of the Indian Territory and Oklahoma and when some candidate in whom our part of the country was interested happened to be elected the men would shoot the anvils in Father's shop for hours at night and there would be great noises and shouting and many brush fires.

I was married to my husband, C. C. Moore, in 1899 and we farmed in that part of the country until 1904, when he and I moved to Kiowa County where we settled three miles south of Lone Wolf and continued to farm.

My husband died April 2, 1931, and I, with the help of my children, am going on with our farm home. We live near the Highway 44, and like Altus and have many of the modern conveniences but I doubt whether people are as happy now as in the early days of Oklahoma.