

MORRIS, MOUNT ETNA. INTERVIEW 10548

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

MORRISS, MOUNT ETNA.

INTERVIEW.

10548.

Field Worker's name Ethel V. Elder.

This report made on (date) February 24, 1938. 1938

1. Name Mount Etna Morriss.

2. Post Office Address Waurika, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 509 East D Avenue.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 12 Year 1857.

5. Place of birth Dadeville, Dade County, Missouri.

6. Name of Father William Henry Morriss. Place of birth Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Octavia Arbuckle. Place of birth Virginia.

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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Ethel V. Elder
Investigator
February 24, 1938

Interview with Mount Etna Morriss,
509 East D. Avenue, Waurika, Oklahoma.

My grandfather on my father's side was Mount Etna Morriss. He is buried in Dade County, Missouri, and my grandmother on my father's side died in 1865, and is buried in Dade County, Missouri. My father's name was William Henry Morriss. He was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and died in September, 1877, and is buried in Bradley County, Arkansas. My mother's name was Octavia Arbuckle. She was born in the state of Virginia and died in 1897 and is buried in Atoka County. I was born April 12, 1857, in Dadeville, Dade County, Missouri. I have three brothers and one sister, one brother is living at Little Rock, Arkansas, now.

When I was four years old my parents went to Texas, settling first in Grayson County on a farm and they lived there one year, then moved to San Marcus, Texas, in 1863 and lived in various places in Texas - Missouri coming to Indian Territory in the year of 1893. When ... came to the

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Indian Territory we were working two head of horses and two mules to our wagons; we crossed Red River at Colbert's Ferry at Denison, Texas, and forded the river at that time as the water was shallow.

We settled at a little place called Center, located close to where the town of Ada is today. I ran a general mercantile store there about two years, then was appointed United States Constable and served in that office for five or six years there at Ada at which time I moved to Lawton and went into the real estate business ^{remaining} for about eighteen months. When they first started to survey for the town of Waurika I came here and continued in the real estate business and after the town was built up some I was appointed Constable, then Chief of Police and then Night Watchman and after that I received a United States Commission. The court centers were at Sulphur, Ada, Stonewall, Rolf and Johnsonville.

The largest marketing point then was at Kansas City and some of the large cattle buyers always came through the country and would buy many head of cattle about shipping time and drive them to the shipping point.

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Arch McKinnon was chairman of all allotments. The white men would marry the Indian women and we would buy their surplus land from these white men.

Some United States deputy marshals were Heck Thomas, Buck Garrett, Bob Nester, John Mede, Lem Mitchell, Guss Bobby, Ed Brentz, John Hammer, Jr., (Captain John Hamer, chief marshal), Jim Bridges, Chris Madsen, scout for General Custer, and Bass Reaves, a negro.

In 1891 many furs and hides were shipped, and as well as I can remember they sold for \$1.00 apiece.

Every Saturday the Indians would come to the little towns and spend the day gambling, they would tie their horses' bridles together and bet on which one would get loose first, just anything they could think of to bet on, they bet everything they had.

I remember one time there was a killing among the Indians, One cut the head off of another one with an ax, They started his trial one day and did not finish up the trial so they told him to go home and get through with all his work that night and come back next morning as they would complete his trial and he might not get to go home any more.

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He did as he was told and they proceeded with the trial next day and that night they had a big dance. They made 'Pashofa' out of corn meal and meat - boiled it like a stew and would eat it with large wooden and horn spoons. Then they made another mixed up pot they called Tom Fuller, which was made out of sour corn cooked like hominy. They would drag two large logs up on each side of the pot that was cooking and as soon as it was ready to eat they would all sit on the logs on each side and dip their spoons in and eat out of the pots.

At the place they called Stonewall in the early days, that was close to the place where Ada now is located, there was a gang of outlaws who had a hiding place in an old building eight miles from there on the creek called Boggy Bottom; they had over two wagon loads of saddles and harness they had stolen and stored there.

When they were raided one of the outlaws was killed and the others were captured and all the stolen property was taken and then advertised for the owners to come and claim their property. People came from everywhere to get their saddles and harness and other things that belonged to them.

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Some of the Indians of prominence that I knew were Mart Chitwell, Dubie Gore, Humphrey Adtkins, Tandy Walker, Daniel Harrison, Jim Perry, Quannah Parker and Geronimo and his wife.

The Indians were always very honest to pay their debts; if they owed anyone anything they would always bring a few head of steers to pay the debt with; that was the way they always paid.

I have two sticks about three feet long that the Indians used to play ball with; they are called ball sticks, made out of bois d' arc poles and have cut out places filled in with sinews of buffalo and oxen. The Indians would have tall poles a certain distance apart and they would take two of these ball sticks, one in each hand, and pick up the ball and throw it past the poles. The one who threw his ball past the pole first won the game.

I have a bow and several arrows that Quannah Parker gave me and some moccasins that his wife made and gave me. Also have a fighting spike that Geronimo made, the trenches on it were made by the use of sinews; sometimes the Indians would sharpen their arrows on the spikes.

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The pioneers would have the big camp meetings in summertime under a brush arbor for weeks at a time; they had a big cook tent and sometimes as many as five hundred would attend at one time.

The preacher who usually held the meetings was named George Grey; he lived on a farm and would not have a nickel of salary so a bunch of the men would get together with about twenty or thirty teams and go in and break his land and plant it for him.

I met my first wife one day at a camp meeting in Arkansas and we were married the next day and lived very happily for eighteen years; we came to Indian Territory and she died here and is buried at Center.

I was about nine or ten years of age when I first started to school in Graniteville, Missouri, I went to a school one year there and the next school that I attended was at Paris, Texas, about one year there, then to Waco, Texas, about five years there; the teacher was Flournoy. The school was a half dugout, one room, the rest of it was made of logs.

I quit school and went to work for a sawmill back in Arkansas, I drove two yoke of oxen to a two-wheel cart and drug the logs to mill.