

MORRISON, SUSAN

INTERVIEW

#13151 **134**

BIOGRAPHY  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

MORRISON, SUSAN

INTERVIEW

#13151

Field Worker's name Alene D. McDowellThis report made on (date) February 14, 1938

1. Name Mrs. Susan Morrison
2. Post Office Address 1112 West 3rd, Bartlesville, Okla-  
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3. Residence address (or location) 1112 W. 3rd, Bartlesville,  
Oklahoma.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 12 Year 1866
5. Place of birth Krebs, Indian Territory

6. Name of Father Richard M. McCoy Place of birth Georgia  
 Other information about father Buried in Sequoyah County
7. Name of Mother Ellen Adair-McCoy Place of birth Georgia  
 Other information about mother Buried in Sequoyah County

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 13.

Alene D. McDowell  
Research Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
February 14, 1938

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DWIGHT MISSION  
Interviewed by  
Mrs. Susan K. Morrison  
1112 West 3rd.  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Mrs. Susan K. Morrison was born January 12, 1866, at Krebs, Indian Territory.

Father - Richard M. McCoy was born in Georgia and died in the Indian Territory at the age of 69 years. He is buried near the old Sweet Springs school in Sequoyah County.

Mother - Ellen Adair-McCoy was born in Georgia, died at the age of 68 years and is buried in Sequoyah County.

My parents came from Georgia to the Indian Territory with a colony of Cherokee emigrants in 1838-39. My mother was three years of age and my father was ten when their parents came to the Indian Territory and settled at Dwight Mission, near Tahlequah.

Dwight Mission was the first mission in the Cherokee Nation and was supported by the Presbyterians. It was founded at the mouth of the Illinois Creek in what is now Pope County, Arkansas, in 1821, by Rev. Cephas Washburn. This mission was named in

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honor of Rev. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College. In 1829 it was transplanted on Sallisaw Creek, in what is now Sequoyah County, Oklahoma.

The mission had several small houses where the missionary families and some of the Indian families lived. The <sup>early</sup> missionaries at Dwight were Rev. Samuel A. Worcester, Rev. Jephthas Washburn, Rev. Alfred Finney, John Hitchcock and James Orr. Rev. Willie was the missionary there when I was a child. Those who came to the Mission earlier than 1838 were known as old settlers.

The missionary houses were two room houses built of hewn logs, with a garret above. Our home was a four room double log house with two rooms below and two above with a hallway between the rooms. We had two windows in the house, one in the east and one in the west. The floors were of white maple and were scrubbed every day. Soft soap was applied freely, then sand was sprinkled over the floor and scrubbed with a home made scrub brush.

Dr. Elizur Butler came west with the migration of the main body of Cherokees at the same time my

grandparents aid. My parents were both of Cherokee extraction. My father was a half-breed, while my mother had very little Indian blood. I am enrolled as a quarter blood.

My maternal grandfather was a wealthy man and when my parents were married he bought a home and furnished it for them. He sent to Boston and bought the furniture. We had wooden beds made of Cherry, with high head boards, a white maple table and chairs, a six-legged table and cup board made of cherry. This table was about 3 feet square. We cooked on a stone fireplace. The first stove we bought was known as a step stove. It had two burners in front, a raised space about 4 inches high and 4 inches wide across the full length of the top, and two burners in the back.

There was a furnace at the mission used for baking. It was about four feet high and five feet square and was constructed of stone. The fire was underneath the oven. Each family was given a baking day and we baked a week's supply on that day.

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There is a white maple mixing bowl that has gone through four generations of the family.

The first school I attended was held in a one room log house 16 feet square and we sat on benches along the side of the wall. After the war school houses were built but they were far apart. I later attended the Cherokee Female Seminary at Tahlequah.

The Cherokees were a peace loving tribe and during the Civil War they remained neutral for a long time but they were finally forced into the encounter. My father enlisted in the Confederate army under General Stand Watie.

After my father left my mother carried on with the responsibilities of the home and family. She was still at the mission and the missionaries helped the Indian families the best they could.

One day my mother's home was robbed by a band of full-blood Cherokees, known as the Pen Indians or the "Keetoowah Secret Society" who robbed the people and destroyed their property. She had removed her best furniture and valuables

to the basement of her home for protection. When the robbers came they ransacked the house from top to basement and destroyed everything. She had 50 pounds of feathers in a large sack, ~~and~~ they took them outside and ripped the sack and scattered the feathers to the four winds.

My mother did fancy work and had to order her embroidery floss from Boston. She had this stored in the basement and during the robbery one of the men was attracted by the bright colored floss and came outside with it wrapped around his fingers. My five year old sister snatched it from him and gave it to one of the missionaries who put it in the bosom of his shirt for safe keeping.

Shortly after the outbreak of the war the mission was abandoned and my mother loaded her possessions into the wagon and drove an ox team and started with four or five other Cherokee families for Texas. She traveled as far as the Choctaw Nation and settled at Krebs, six miles east of McAlester. She lived in one of the two

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rooms

of the Krebs home. The little town of Krebs was named for this family of Choctaws. She was living at this place when my father returned home at the end of the War in the early spring of 1865. I was born at Krebs the next year.

When my mother left the mission she took two orphan Cherokee boys, Blue Foreman and Sam Sloane, who were about 16 years old, with her. They were a great help to her and stayed with the family and returned to the Cherokee Nation with them after the War.

The Cherokees had a limited time in which to return to the Cherokee Nation so in the spring of 1867 we returned and settled on a small farm south of Tahlequah.

My sister and I were playing along the creek bank one day when we discovered a sunken hole in the ground. We dug deeper and found a large box of blue willow ware dishes that some one had buried during the War.

My father farmed on a small scale. The principal crop in our vicinity was corn. He raised four or five



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acres  
of cotton and hauled it to Fort Smith to the gin. This cotton was used for quilt padding only. He raised about 10 acres of wheat and threshed it with a horse power machine. We raised the principal part of our living.

In the fall my father would bury our cabbage, potatoes, sweet potatoes and apples. The apples were buried in a straw lined pit with a board top over them to keep the dirt from falling down over them. When they were dug they were fresh and ready for use. We dried what fruit was available, mostly apples, and peaches. There was not much fruit here when we returned for everything was in a down-trodden state and what fruit trees there had been were destroyed. My father built a rail fence around the place and my mother planted a peach tree in each corner where the rails lapped.

There was no sale for live hogs in the Indian Territory so my father butchered his hogs and hauled them to Fort Smith twice a year. He made these trips in April and November. He also took big tubs of butter

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and crates of eggs to market on these trips. He bought six months supply of groceries at this time. We also bought supplies from Mr. Percival at Fort Gibson.

The first printing press in the Indian Territory was at Park Hill Mission where the mission printing for the Cherokees, Choctaws and Creeks was done. The Cherokee Advocate, the first newspaper was printed at Tahlequah.

In 1882, when I was 16 years old, I removed with my parents to a farm 2 miles north of Chelsea, in Rogers County. In 1883 I married Robert Morrison. We were married in what is now Rogers County, 20 miles south of Coffeyville, on California Creek. We are the parents of 12 children, all of them born in Oklahoma. They all lived to be grown. I have ten children living and one son and one daughter deceased.

The Cherokees had their own form of Government and political views. The Indian Police took care of the prisoners. Shelly Keys and John Brown were Indian

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Police in our vicinity.

The two political parties were the National Party and the Downing Party. The National Party was supported by the Baptist Delawares, Shawnees and full-blood Cherokees, while the Methodist Delawares and Shawnees became ardent supporters of the Downing Party. The National Party was similar to the present Republican form of government and the Downing Party had the same principles of the Democrats.

I attended a political picnic in the fall of 1883 at Chelsea where a big campaign was held and many able speakers gave interesting addresses.

The stage ran from Muskogee through Webbers Falls to Fort Smith. I made this trip to visit my parents, who had moved to Sequoyah County after my marriage, and the trip was a nightmare. The roads were rough and we traveled at breakneck speed. A candle was burned in a lamp on each side of the coach to distinguish the stage from other travelers.

"The Old Whiskey Trail" used by the cattlemen to drive their cattle from Texas to the shipping points at Coffeyville, was located in the eastern

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part of the Indian Territory. It started at the Red River near Denison, Texas, ran through McAlester on east of Nowata to Coffeyville.

Mrs. Owen, Mother of Robert L. Owen, our first senator from Oklahoma, taught music at the seminary at Tahlequah while I attended school there. She was related to Jesse Chisholm who blazed the cattle trail through the Indian Territory from Texas. Her maiden name was Chisholm.

We were living at Tahlequah in 1870 when the M.K. & T. Railroad was built through the Indian Territory to Texas. This was a great event in those early days and although I was small I can remember seeing a train at Vinita in 1871.

We crossed the Arkansas River at Webbers Falls by ferry boat when we went to Fort Smith. Cal Hanks operated the ferry. There was a ford at this location, also.

There was a ferry at the mouth of Grand River where it empties into the Arkansas River at Fort Gibson.

There was a ferry boat landing on Grand River

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near the orphan asylum, 25 miles south of Vinita. There was also a ford at this location.

In 1883 my husband settled on a small ranch of 340 acres on Panther Creek in Osage County. We ran two brands which were registered at Claremore. My husband ran his cattle under the JO brand and my herd was known as the RM brand. We shipped from Elgin, and Coffeyville, Kansas.

Little farming was carried on in Osage County for it was a timbered country and cattle raising was the chief industry.

In the late 80's we removed to a ranch near Glen Oak, southeast of Bartlesville, at the head of Hogshooter Creek where we lived for many years.

My grandmother wove our clothing when we were children and I have helped her at the spinning wheel; however, I never learned to weave. My mother's old spinning wheel has been stored with some of her friends at Sallisaw since the early 80's.

There was no buffalo in this part of the Indian Territory that I can remember. They were all in the Strip Country and the Indians hunted them there until

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the Whites came in and killed them for their hides. To stop this ruthless slaughter, the Government confiscated their wagons and teams.

Ben Dalton and his mother rented our place near Chelsea and moved into one of the two rooms of our home until we could vacate. We had sold the place to Peter Couch and were moving to Glen Oak. This was about the time Frank Dalton was killed at the whiskey still at Fort Smith Landing. Bob Dalton then took up the fight. He shot at the man who had murdered Frank and the man's wife ran between them and was killed by the bullet meant for her husband. Bob then shot the man and all that saved Bob ~~was~~ was his commission as a United States Marshal. Bud Heady, United States Deputy Marshal, was with him at the time.

There was a large family of the Daltons. When they lived in part of our home there were three girls, Eva, Leona and Nanny, and the youngest boy, Simon at home.

I knew Jim and Willie French, who were noted outlaws in our vicinity, when they were children.

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Cherokee Bill and Henry Starr operated in this part  
of the Nation and I have fed them many times.