

THE HISTORY OF THE OLDEST NEGRO PIONEERS OF GRAY COUNTY

(Andrew Johnson Elliott)
Gray County, Kansas

Written by Iris Scott

Told by Julia Louise (Patterson) Elliott



THE ANDREW JOHNSON ELLIOTT FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Johnson Elliott were both born and reared in Tennessee. Mr. Elliott's father was a carpenter by trade. In the days of slavery, the girl slaves were not supposed to marry, but Mr. Elliott's mother did. She had to keep her maiden name, Seawood, until after they were set free from slavery, and then she took the name Elliott. Andrew Johnson Elliott was a slave until he was nine years old. He was a houseboy for his master.

Mrs. Elliott could remember very little about the Civil War, but she remembered seeing the soldiers, both the Confederates and the Union pass through the county. She remembered Mr. Elliott telling about seeing a cavalry of Sherman's men marching back

after the war was over. They marched four abreast down the road past their door. Mr. Elliott would spend many hours each day watching the soldiers pass. It took them three days and three nights to pass his master's plantation. Of course, they took time out to eat. Some of the men rode on horses, and others walked. After they had passed, the road was so badly torn up that it was later abandoned. The cavalry covered about 30 miles a day.

On January 15, 1881, Andrew Johnson Elliott united in marriage with Julia Louise Patterson, whose parents were farmers. They were married in Tennessee, Mrs. Elliott being four years younger than Mr. Elliott. To this union were born four daughters and nine sons, four of whom preceded him in death. Two children were born while they lived in Tennessee, and one of them died there. Mrs. Elliott was 23 years old when they left Tennessee.

Mr. & Mrs. Elliott came to Kansas by train in 1884, first settling in Harper City, Kansas. Mr. Elliott's brother had filed on homestead land in Meade County but was there only a short time, selling his relinquishment papers to Andrew. At that time, Andrew and Julia moved on to Meade, Kansas. They came from Harper City to Cimarron on a load of freight. Mr. Elliott had \$27 in money with him and \$11 in debt. They rode from Cimarron to their new homestead land in Meade County with some people who were also traveling the area. They had to stay with some neighbors until a house could be built for them. The neighbors helped Mr. Elliott build a one-room sod house 10 ft. by 12 ft. The water they used had to be carried for one-half mile until a well was dug. It had to be dug by hand because, at that time, there was no Well Machinery. In this part of the country, the wells were dug in low places, and buckets drew up the soil until they reached the water. Buckets also drew the water.

Work was scarce, and so was money. Mr. Elliot walked many times to Meade, which was 17 miles from their homestead, to find work. He would take the money and buy groceries and carry them home in a sack on his back. They lived at this place for five years until they "proved up" their homestead.

Then Mr. and Mrs. Elliott moved to their present location in 1892, eight miles south of Montezuma in Gray County. There were more people here at that time than there are now because this was homestead land, and there was one family for every quarter of the land. There were only three Negro families here then; Mr. Malony, Mr. Nelson, and Mr. Vest.

Mr. Elliott walked many a time from his home on Crooked Creek to Garden City, approximately 52 miles from there, to work. He was a concrete mixer, and at that time, many brick buildings were being built in Garden City and Scott City.

After Mr. Elliott had lived here for about two years, he and another man went together and bought a team of oxen at Garden City. The team was young and not yet broken in. They became frightened while in Garden City and began running. They ran straddle

through a row of trees that had just been set out on the street, breaking some of them off and bending other trees over. The oxen ran a good part of the way home.

Oxen were used to break up the sod for farming. Horses were not used until a few years later.

In 1894, Mr. Elliott brought some small cottonwood trees from Pueblo, Colorado, and set them out along the creek. They are still there, making good shade along the creek area.

Thirteen children were born to the Elliott family, and there are nine still living. All the Elliott children were educated in what is known as the Shaw schoolhouse, which still stands across the creek from the Elliott farm.

In 1911, Mr. Andrew Elliott made a trip back to Tennessee. Mrs. Elliott never did go back. At the time of this writing, in 1936, she was 76 years old. They lived in Gray County until their deaths. Mr. Elliott was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee, on 19 Oct 1856, and departed this life on 2 Feb 1933, at the age of 76 years, 3 months, and 14 days.

**Additional Information
ANDREW JOHNSON ELLIOTT**

ANDREW JOHNSON ELLIOTT was the son of Peter Thomas Elliott and Mary Jane Rutherford, (*story gives maiden name as Seawood.*) Andrew Elliott was born on 19 Oct 1856 in Jefferson County, Tennessee. There, he married JULIA LOUISE PATTERSON on 20 Nov 1881.

In 1884, Andrew and Julia moved to Harper County, Kansas and in 1886, they moved to Montezuma, Gray County, Kansas where Andrew worked their own farmland. The story above reveals that Andrew also worked as a concrete mixer.

Andrew and Julia had thirteen children: FANNIE ADA (ELLIOTT) JEFFERSON (1882-1952), MAUD ELLIOTT (1884-1909), HUGH ELLIOTT (1887-1964), WALTER GRAY ELLIOTT (1888-1889), HARRY EDWARD ELLIOTT (1890-1960), ROBERT LUTHER ELLIOTT (1892-1967), CHESTER ANDREW ELLIOTT (1893-1965), BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ELLIOTT (1896-1961), EDITHE (ELLIOTT) BASS (1897-1974), IRVIN WESLEY ELLIOTT (1899-1990), ROY VIRGIL ELLIOTT, and NORA EVELYN (ELLIOTT) WILLIAMS (1901-1934). (*The thirteenth child may have died at birth.*)

Andrew passed away on 2 Feb 1933 in Montezuma, Kansas. Julia died there on 9 Jan 1939.

The burial for Andrew and Julia Louise (Patterson) Elliott took place at the Evans Cemetery in Gray County, Kansas.

**Newspaper Obituary
ANDREW JOHNSON ELLIOTT**

The Montezuma (Kansas) Press -10 Feb 1933, Friday - Page 1

Andrew Johnson Elliott was born in Jefferson County, Tennessee, on 19 Oct 1856, and departed this life on 2 Feb 1933, at the age of 76 years, three months, and 14 days.

On 25 Jan 1881, he united in marriage to Julia Louise Paterson. To this union were born four daughters and nine sons, three of whom preceded him in death.

He came to Kansas in 1884, first settling in Harper County and two years later moving to Gray County, where he resided until his death.

There were left to mourn his loss, three sisters, three brothers, his widow, and ten children; Mrs. Perry Jefferson, Manter, Kansas; Harry E. Elliott, Garden City; Mrs. John Bass, Iola, Kansas; Mrs. John Williams, Newton, Kansas, Irvin W. Elliott, Newton, Kansas; Hugh Elliott, Robert Elliott, Chester Elliott, Benjamin Elliott, and Roy Elliott all of Montezuma.

There were also thirty-six grandchildren, eleven great-grandchildren, and a host of other relatives and friends.

Cemetery Headstone
ANDREW JOHNSON ELLIOTT & JULIA LOUISE (PATTERSON) ELLIOTT



EVANS CEMETERY
Gray County, Kansas

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