

# Oklahoma, Here We Come

## Oklahoma Selected for 2025 EFA Conference

Compiled by Harvey Powers

The 2025 conference of the Eller Family Association is now set for the Tulsa area of Oklahoma. The EFA board voted for the location in an October phone-meeting.

A survey suggested, and the board agreed, that the conference should move from July to the third week in October and be three days, rather than four. The board hopes the change of date would find more agreeable weather and the shorter convention, lower hotel costs.



The specific location and agenda will be chosen as we get closer to the event.

The board picked the area around Skiatook and Tulsa, Oklahoma, because several Eller families live in the area. Many have never been to an Eller Conference. It will also be the first conference west of the Mississippi River in more than two decades.

Many Ellers in northeastern Oklahoma can trace their ancestry back to three brothers: [Davis Bogard Eller](#) (1859-1942), [John Corn Eller \(1857-1930\)](#) and [Samuel Jefferson Eller \(1833-1922\)](#). They were sons of [William "Bill" Eller \(1816-after 1900\)](#). All three moved to Oklahoma from north Georgia.

A fourth son [William W. "Will" Eller \(1841-1923\)](#) is believed to have made several trips to Oklahoma to preach. It's believed he intended to stay but because of his wife's sickness, he never moved permanently.

[John Corn Eller](#) moved to Oklahoma around 1890 with his wife, [Salena Maney](#), and her parents. He operated a hardware store in Hulbert, Oklahoma.

[Davis Bogard Eller](#) and his four children moved to Oklahoma before the 1900 census. It's believed he moved shortly after the death of his wife, [Hariett Maney](#), the sister of his brother's wife.

Davis Eller was a farmer and rancher. He first lived near Tahlequah on the Illinois River where he opened a grocery store and Post Office which was known as Ellerville, Oklahoma. About 1920 Davis Eller moved to Skiatook, Oklahoma, where he opened another grocery store.

We know less about [Samuel Jefferson Eller](#). He moved to Cherokee County, Oklahoma, after his two brothers but prior to the 1920 census. He died there as did at least two of his children.

The area in Georgia from which the Ellers moved had been home to thousands of Cherokee Indians. But from 1831 to about 1850 many were forced from their homes and “relocated” to Northeast Oklahoma, in the area where we found the Ellers.

Some say as many as 100,000 Native Americans were part of this ethnic cleansing by the U.S. government. Many died along the way. It was known as the “Trail of Tears.”

So, what does the Cherokee relocation have to do with the Ellers move to Oklahoma? It is possible the two Eller wives, Salena Maney and Harriett Maney, along with the two women’s parents, were Cherokee or Cherokee descendants. Davis Eller filed an application (see below) on 29 Jul 1896 in an effort to certify his children as Cherokee citizens. The application was denied for lack of evidence.

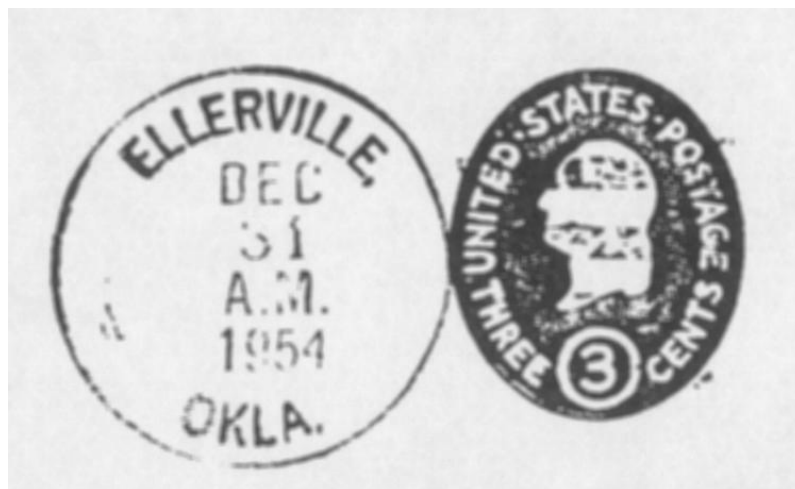
Towns County historian Jerry Taylor says the Maneys have always claimed Cherokee ancestry. He says, “in the early 1900’s when folks could file claims, many Maneys filed claims but were rejected.”

We can trace this Maney family back to [Martin Maney \(1749-1830\)](#). He came from Ireland and married [Keziah Vann](#), who Taylor says was supposed to have been a mixed-breed daughter of John Vann and Agnes Wetherford.

Historian Taylor says many people from North Georgia went west about the time the Ellers moved. Some had family ties or friends among the relocated Native Americans there. And when Oklahoma became a state, the “Homestead Act” (took effect 1889) promised cheap land and business opportunities. We know two of the Eller brothers opened stores in Oklahoma.

Many families also tried to take advantage of monetary benefits being given to Cherokee descendants. Some were due these benefits. Some were not.

We may never know if the Eller wives were part Cherokee. We do know that the Eller brothers appeared to prosper in Oklahoma and have left a large family of descendants.



Ellerville Postmark (1954)

### *Application for Cherokee citizenship. (Transcribed 2023)*

Your petitioner Davis B. Eller father and guardian for Ida Ann Eller aged 16 years, old John Lester Eller aged 14 years, William Alford aged 11 years and Welthy Caroline aged 9 years, children of Harriet Louisa Eller whose maiden name was Harriet Louisa Maney applying for enrollment of said children as Cherokee citizens stating that the petitioner was married to said Harriet Louisa in Towns County Georgia in 1878 and he Afterwards

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Petitioner says that his said wife and mother of his said children was the daughter of John C. Maney who was the son of James Maney who lived in the old Cherokee Nation. That said John C. Maney James and the petitioners said wife were Cherokee Indians by blood and said John C. and James Maney were known and recognized as Cherokees by blood and were in tribal relatives with the Cherokees previous to the removal.

Petitioner further says that he and his said children reside in the Cherokee Nation about four miles from Tuhlemah and have there resided for about three years.

Wherefore the petitioner prays that the names of his said children be enrolled as Cherokee citizens.

Buster E. McBride,

Atty.

Davis B. Eller says the statements in the foregoing petition are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

*Davis B. Eller*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this July 29th 1896.

*W. X. McBride*  
*Notary Public*

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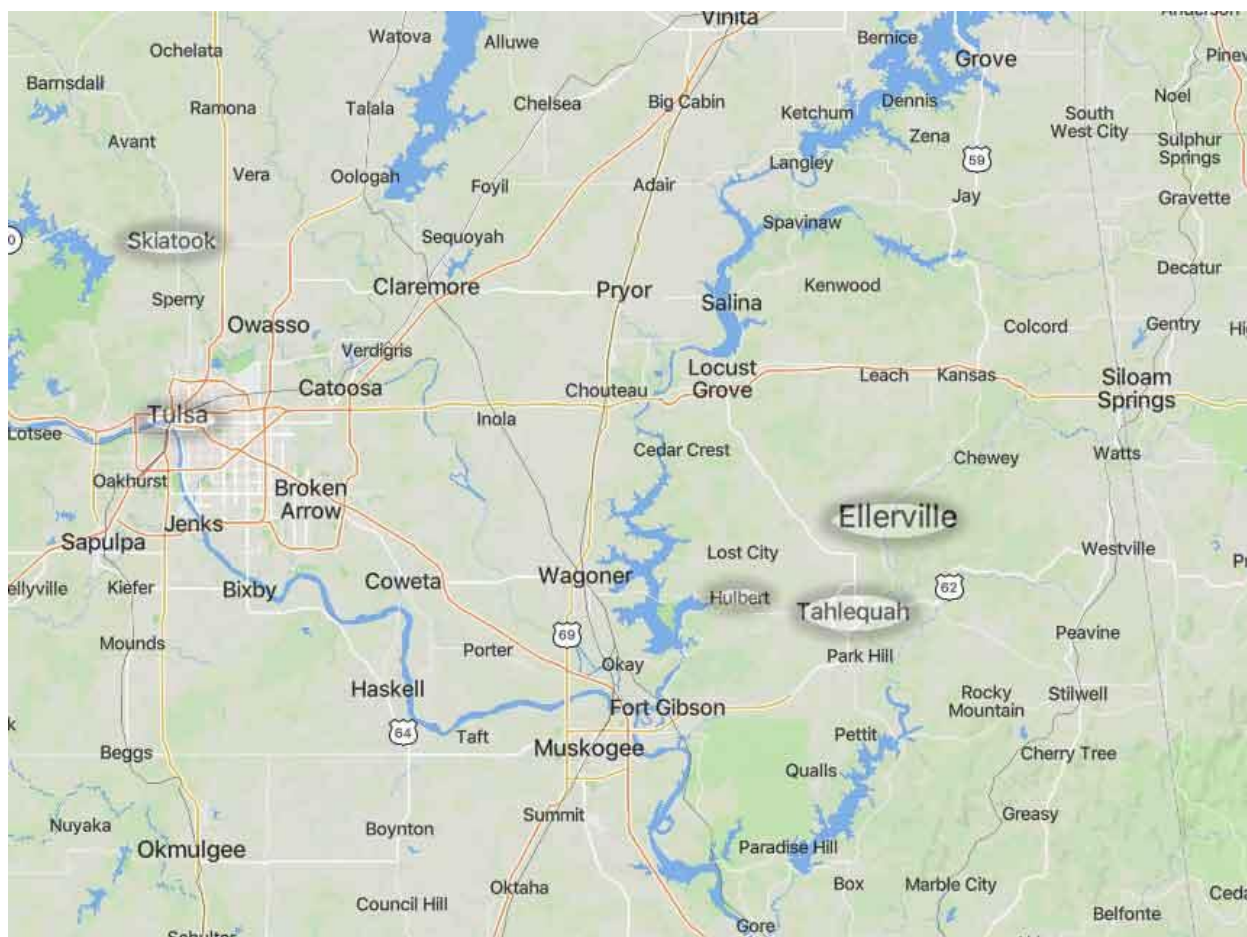
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### Sources:

*Eller Chronicles*, November 1992,

<http://www.ellerfamilyassociation.com/chronicles/nov92/nov92p4.html>

Also source of photograph, postmark & application.

Oklahoma Historical Society: The Homestead Act (1862)

<https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=HO022>

Jerry Taylor, Email dated 8/27/2023

The Indigenous Foundation

<https://www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/a-brief-history-on-the-trail-of-tears>