

McBRIDE, J. B. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

8739

65

MCBRIDE, J. B. (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

8739

Interviewer, Virgil Coursey,
September 29, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. J. B. McBride,
Altus, Oklahoma.

We came to Oklahoma in 1888. The party consisted of my father, a sister, a younger brother, my father's mother and myself. We settled one and a half miles south of Blair but soon moved to a place near Martha, where we homesteaded.

My father, C. B. Meade, took an active part in the establishment of the town of Martha.

In 1886 the Clint Maddux family had settled here and were followed by the W. I. Cotney family, the Medlins, the Hunnicuts and the Hosmers. By the 90's there were quite a number of settlers here.

There was an excellent community spirit manifested and soon there was an agitation for the establishment of schools and churches.

The first school was taught by Miss Martha Medlin, daughter of the Reverend Mr. I. F. Medlin, pastor of the First Baptist Church. This school was taught in a dugout,

MCBRIDE, J. B. (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

8739

-2-

one mile northwest of what is now Martha.

One of the old pioneers plowed a furrow from the settlement to the school in order that children might find their way on foggy mornings. We walked from two to four miles to school after wading in snow, knee deep. We had to pay tuition.

In 1889 a small frame building was erected in Martha.

The Reverend Mr. Hosmer, a circuit rider from Vernon, organized a community Sunday School. From then on the development of church and school systems progressed rapidly.

In the earlier days wolves were bad, and it was almost impossible to raise chickens.

Supplies were bought at Vernon, Texas, and it usually took four days to make the round trip. There were no bridges, and people were frequently caught by a spring head-rise and their supplies over-turned in the river.

We had no particular dealings with the Indians, though they sometimes stopped by on their trips to certain celebrations in Texas. They invariably asked for food, and if one could not understand them the Indians would point out the articles they were asking for.

-3-

The Indians were great traders and often traded shoes and blankets issued to them by the Government for trifling articles of no particular value.

There were few Indian uprisings but the earlier settlers were prepared for them. I can remember seeing secret under-ground chambers which were connected with the main dugout by a long narrow passage. There was an outside entrance to these secret rooms, and they were hidden by a cane patch or other husky growth. When there was any fear of a raid, the children were put to bed in the secret chamber and the grown people kept watch, ready to dart in and bolt doors at a moment's notice.

We had plenty to eat in those days, though it was plain fare. Some people had cook stoves, others did not. There was plenty of beef. Beef was often broiled or fried over an open fire in the yard.

This beef was preserved by placing something like a quarter of beef on a long pole on the north side of the house. There were few flies and in a short time a thin, hard crust would form over the meat. The inside would be as nice and juicy as the day the beef was killed.

MCBRIDE, J. B. (Mrs.) INTERVIEW.

8739

-4-

Cereal consisted of wheat ground in a coffee mill.

It made a cereal very similar to cream of wheat. There was not much fruit available but we gathered all the wild Chickasaw plums, currants and wild grapes we could find and made jellies and preserves. We raised sorghum cane and had our own mill. We put up sufficient syrup for our use. This sorghum syrup was frequently used for preserving the fruit.

Speaking of living conditions reminds me that neighbors were free hearted and always willing to divide their substance with others.

In 1895 there was a terrible drouth. The ground cracked open and birds died of thirst. The people of the community decided to pray for rain. When they met at the little church at ten o'clock in the morning not a cloud was in sight, but that afternoon there was thunder and lightning and a down-pour of rain.

I was married to Mr. McBride in 1900. We have lived alternately in Texas and Oklahoma ever since.

INDEX CARDS

Toll Bridges--Choctaw Nation

Stoke

Rolson, J. W.

Percentage Establishments--Choctaw Nation