

McKNIGHT, AGNES

INTERVIEW.

#8955

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) October 14, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Agnes B. McKnight

2. Post Office Address Geary, Oklahoma, Route #1

3. Residence address (or location) Five miles northwest

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1878

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father Eli Barclay Place of birth Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Other information about father Died in 1899

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Other information about mother Died a few years before her husband

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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An Interview with Mrs. Agnes McKnight, Geary, Okla.

By - Augusta H. Custer - Field Worker.

October 14, 1937.

Mrs. Agnes Barclay McKnight is a sister of Edward Barclay, the first postmaster to be appointed at the Judson office, one mile north and four miles west of where Geary is today. This is the story of early days told by Mrs. McKnight.

My brother, Edward, came to Oklahoma in 1892 and secured a claim one mile north and four miles west of where Geary is today. He was never a very strong man and was crippled so that he could not walk as well as most people. Due to this fact he was not able to farm or do the hard work of breaking up the sod and planting the fields in a new country. He decided to have a few supplies for the settlers and so started with a small stock of groceries. When the Star Route was established from Northville to Etna, fifteen miles farther northwest, he was appointed postmistress and the mail was carried three times a week, from El Reno to Northville, Judson and Etna.

My father, Eli Barclay, and my sister, Fannie, took up claims near Union City. My father and Fannie sold

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their claims. Edward was not well and unable to do the work of keeping the store and the postoffice. Mother, Father and Sister Fannie came to help Edward. Fannie and I stayed down near Union City and taught school in Canadian County for over six years.

My sister, Nannie, filed on a claim just south of my brother, Edward. She married Harry Everts and he helped her to run through with her property.

In 1894, Edward died and Nannie was appointed postmaster and kept it until it was discontinued because of the post office at Geary being established, one mile north and one half west of where it is today. The name was given in honor of Ed Gerrier, a farmer, and L. M. Hartley was the postmaster. He conducted a general store in connection with the office in 1898. In a few months the office was moved into town.

Geary had a population of 700 in 1898.

The Judson store and post office was the headquarters for political discussions, shooting matches, horse races, picnics and general meeting place for

the settlers between 1893 and 1887.

This was where fourth of July picnic dinners were held, revival meetings, and the place to learn the news of the neighbors such as, arrival of relatives, births, deaths, and marriages. Also many a surprise party was planned while neighbors were getting their mail.

They would go home, load all the family into the big wagon box, and drive many miles over the rough roads to enjoy the evening with their friends. If the room was small it was considered no trouble at all to move the scanty furniture outside and with the floor cleared the fiddler would strike up a tune and the dance would go merrily on until long past midnight. The lights would often be only one or maybe two coal oil lamps with No. 1 burners. When the crowd would go home the host and hostess would carry in the bedstead, set it up and then put on the slats, and they were lucky if they had springs. The tick was often filled with shucks or wild grass or straw.

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Sometimes the woman would decide that this was a good time to clean out the corners and just bring in the straw tick and place it on the floor with the other bed clothes where they would sleep until morning, when she would give the floor a good sweeping and scrubbing, then move the furniture back in place and everything was arranged once more.

There was an old bachelor who sometimes worked for my father on the farm, and he took my sister, Nannie, to a few of the parties and literaries given in the near school houses. He was rather bashful and this gave the men and boys a good opportunity to tease him and my sister. One sister had a little pet dog and this man did not like dogs. The dog was just a very ordinary dog with smooth hair and a long slender tail.

One time there were two of the hired men cutting oats and the dog had gone to sleep in the field. When the mowing machine came along he did not wake up in time and the cycle cut his tail off. The driver of the machine did not want the blame and so the two

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agreed to lay it on to the old bachelor. They made their story so plausible that it nipped the romance, that had hardly begun between the two.
