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BUTLER, MILLIE M.

INTERVIEW

10094

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

BUTLER, MILLIE M.

INTERVIEW.

10094.

Field Worker's name Zaidce B. Bland.

This report made on (date) February 25, 1933. 1933

1. Name Millie M. Butler.

2. Post Office Address Hollis, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Northeast Hollis.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 22 Year 1875.

5. Place of birth Whitley County, Kentucky.

6. Name of Father Colonel Bolton. Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Sarah Davis. Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about mother _____

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 _____.

BUTLER, MILLIE M.

INTERVIEW.

10094.

Zaidee B. Bland,
Journalist,
Feb. 25, 1938.

Interview With Millie M. Butler,
Hollis, Oklahoma.

From Arkansas where I was raised we moved to Montague County, Texas, in 1889. We were not far over the river from Indian Territory and my husband and father ran cattle on both sides of Red River. Father came across first with Mother and the younger children, but we followed in about three years. We had only a few miles to go and we moved in a covered wagon. There had been so many trips back and forth that most everything was over but the family when we finally carried the last load across.

We had a lease from a squaw man. The land was in the woods, with only about forty acres cleared and that was full of stumps. We had a big double log house to live in with a big stone fireplace in one room, where I did all my cooking that was not done on the outside over an open fire. We moved with us chickens, pigs and other barnyard animals and fowls. We did not move much furniture, for in those days we had only the necessary beds, chairs, and tables.

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All cooking vessels were of iron. Milk containers, and crocks and buckets were wood as were the tubs and spoons and forks. We never drank water out of anything but a gourd and used gourds for lots of other containers.

We crossed the river near Spanish Fort. There was a rail fence around the cultivated part of the land and the house and lots. There were a lot of big black jack trees in the yard. The place had a good well of water on it, right in the yard, and a spring branch for the stock to drink from. The soil was a black loam and we raised every kind of vegetable I ever heard of in the garden. In the field corn, cotton and cane were about all the things we planted and we only raised enough cane for our own syrup. Porto Rico and Pumpkin Yam potatoes were planted in the fields. The place had no orchard but there was so much wild fruit we hardly missed it. In the woods were strawberries, blackberries, dewberries, raspberries, gooseberries, red and black haws, persimmons; I cannot remember everything but it seemed to me there was always something to go to the woods for; of course, nuts of all kinds. We made a persimmon bread and beer from persimmons that were especially good.

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We lived among the Creek Indians several years and then among the Comanches, but we had no truck with them to speak of; they let us alone and we let them alone. I went to the funeral of a white man who had married an Indian. They put him into the ground as you would any white man, but would throw only a little dirt in at a time and then get in and tramp the dirt down to keep the Devil Man from getting the corpse.

I made my own soap and washed with a battling stick for a long time until wood washboards came into the country. All tubs were wooden, usually made from ash or white oak. Lynnwood was used quite a bit for tubs and buckets.

There were no schools much anywhere so we did not bother about them much, just taught our youngsters to work and be honest.

I have seen a lot of floods on the Canadian River; I had a brother-in-law who lived in the bottom and lots of times he would have to drive all his stock out to the higher grounds and then get his family and come out and stay with us until the river ran down. He was always watching the river in flood time and never did get caught and have to be taken out in a boat.

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I was grown before I ever saw a woman wear a hat. An uncle of mine got a hat, a white bibbed apron and a corset for his daughter to be married in and that corset went the rounds of the neighborhood for each bride to be married in for ten years. All the girls wanted to be married in a corset, so would borrow that corset to be married in. Aunt Lindy said one did not need to have a white apron to be married in but Uncle Blue White said his daughter had to be a little different, so she had to put her apron over her wedding dress. We always had big dinners at those weddings. You sent invitations by word of mouth and seldom was any friend left out but, of course, there were always feuds between families that you had to remember and not invite enemies to the same family affair.

Everyone wore sun bonnets to church and everywhere. We were taught it was a sin of vanity to wear a hat. A glutton, one who always ate too much, was also a sinner. In fact, pretty nearly anything you wanted to do was a sin.