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BENNETT, MARY.

INTERVIEW

8796

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

BENNETT, MARY

INTERVIEW

8796

Field Worker's name Mildred B. McFarland
This report made on (date) September 28, 1937 193

- 1. Name Mrs. Mary Bennett
- 2. Post Office Address Jones, Oklahoma
- 3.* Residence address (or location) R. R. 2
- 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 15 Year 1861
- 5. Place of birth South Bend, Indiana

- 6. Name of Father Anthony Aubert Place of birth Switzerland
Other information about father _____
- 7. Name of Mother Adeline Aubert Place of birth Switzerland
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 3

BENNETT, MARY

INTERVIEW

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Mildred B. McFarland,
Interviewer,
September 28, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Mary Bennett,
R. R. 2, Jones, Oklahoma.

My husband and I formerly lived in St. Marys, Kansas. He came to Oklahoma in 1890 and contested a homestead that a "sooner" by the name of Norman Yowl was holding. We had quite a lawsuit and it was more than a year before we finally won it. In the meantime we had bought a "fraction" just south, adjoining the homestead from a Mr. Seal. He had built a small house made from cottonwood lumber. We lived in that until our case was settled.

We had an extremely hard time at first. We had to clean off brush and grub out roots, and it was a year before we raised anything. After our garden started producing, I would load up the big wagon with vegetables and, starting at midnight, would drive all alone to Oklahoma City. I would get to the outskirts of town about one hour before dawn. I spread a quilt under the wagon and slept until daylight, then drove from door to door, selling my vegetables.

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We drank river water for about three years, before we could afford to have ^a well out down.

The first winter we nearly starved. The neighbors kept us supplied with kraut. We borrowed half-ripe corn and grated it on a piece of tin with nail holes in it, to make bread. We lived on hoe cake and kraut until spring. It nearly killed us. We didn't have a gun so we tried to trap wild game for a change of food, but were not very successful at it.

Our furniture was all home-made. We made a cupboard, table and beds of logs. We slept on a mattress made of corn husks. We used boxes for chairs. Our bed was in the loft over head and the space was so small I had to crawl on my hands and knees to make up the bed.

We use the house now to store our grain.

Mr. Hartsell started a town just a half mile from us. It was called "Hartsell".

The post office was in the same building in which he lived. We bought the building and still have it on our place. The roof was hinged to the side walls and the walls were hinged to the floor. Mr. Hartsell's name is carved in stone over the doorway.

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There was a large peach orchard on the Kickapoo Indian reservation. We always went there to buy our peaches to can. They sold them to us for fifty cents a bushel. They never would let us help pick them, but made the squaws do it.

When I had to wash our clothes I always took them to the river. I had a large iron kettle there, that I would use to boil them in and rinse them in the river.

There was plenty of game on the place and plenty of fish in the river.

We have lived on the homestead ever since we came here and are very happy. We feel we have accomplished quite a lot during that time.