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Greer County
Dugout
Living Conditions

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

4425

Field Worker's name Ruth KerboThis report made on (date) June 11 19371. Name rs. Mary Kerbo2. Post Office Address Gould, Oklahoma R.#23. Residence address (or location) 9 miles northeast of Gould4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 20 Year 18695. Place of birth Decator, Texas6. Name of Father James Hopkins Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Sarah Cryer Place of birth _____

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 _____.

Ruth Kerbo
Indian-Pioneer History
June 11, 1937

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Experiences of Mrs. Mary Kerbo,
Gould, Oklahoma, R#2

We had been renting land near Iowa Park, Texas, and with our family of seven children we were not making much headway toward securing a home.

Bob and Jack Parkey, who had been living near us at Iowa Park, had already come to Greer County and had been writing for us to come and file on a place.

We decided we would never own a home as long as we had to rent land so we put our belongings in a covered wagon and started for Greer County. My sister and her husband came in their wagon along with us.

Our bedding, a few dishes, dutch oven, some chairs and a home-made table and \$2.00 in money was about all we had.

We stuck our wagon in the river at Doans Crossing. The team was so poor and unfed, they could not pull the wagon across the quicksand. We had to give a fellow \$1.00 to pull us across. He said, "you must have that wagon loaded with lead".

It was in September, 1899, when we arrived at Bob Parkey's place. We stayed there for several days. They were getting ready to pick cotton. We helped him pick all of his cotton for \$.50 per hundred.

We filed on this place we live on which is about twenty miles southwest of Mangum or nine miles northeast of Gould.

We have seen plenty of hard times, since we settled on

this place. Several times the first years after we came here I have had but one dress and would have to take it off and go around in my petticoat until I could wash and dry it. I could not afford shoes and have gone barefoot until late in the fall, really I would nearly freeze. I told my husband he had to be out in the field and had to go to town and needed shoes worse than the girls and I did.

We lived in a dug-out for about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years. We had two stoves and I had to make a bed down on the floor. I don't know how we ever made out, but we lived somehow.

Two of my babies were born in the dug-out. Dr. Meredith had moved into the community and we always called him, but sometimes he would not get there in time. He had to go on horseback and was the only doctor in the country, and was awfully busy.

We had nothing to eat the first year we farmed here but corn bread and gyp water. We used the water from the tanks out in the gyp hills where the water stood.

I drank that gyp water until it made me so sick I could hardly live. Our neighbor who lived $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from us had a good well of water. I made a small sled and my boy 9 years old and the girl 8 years old would go with me over to the neighbor's well and get water to drink. They would pull a two gallon jug of water on the sled and I carried a water bucket full. This would last us all day and until the next morning when we would go for more. We did this way until my husband

could get a barrel to haul the water in. I saw that there was no water wasted at our house.

We had a horse and mule when we got here. And shortly after we arrived here our mule died, leaving us with only one horse to make a crop with. We borrowed a pony from Bob Parkey until we could make money enough to buy one.

Fortunately we made several good crops. The new land produced good feed and corn and our cotton was very good. We got some cows from a neighbor to milk.

Most of our supplies came from Vernon, Texas. There was a little store at Russell soon after we came. We never bought much for we didn't have any money and couldn't get any. We dug mesquite roots to burn. I cooked on a camp fire and fireplace for two and one-half years. Finally, we got able to buy lumber enough to make a half dug-out. I felt like we were almost rich to have windows we could see out of. A year or two later we built a one room house in front of the dug-out door. This served as our bedroom and the dug-out our kitchen and dining room. By this time I was able to own a cook stove.

I never used less than eight yards of material in my dresses. I always made my skirts with not less than three widths of material in them and if I could afford more I would use four and five widths in the skirt. We always wore as many as three petticoats.

All the women wore calico dresses and when we went to preaching all the women were dressed in the same kind of dresses and nobody felt embarrassed.

We raised twelve of our fourteen children here, the other two dying when they were young. We have made a living and now own over six hundred acres of land. We have seen some hard times but I believe we were happier then than people are in this modern time.