

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

LEBRECHT, ELLA

INTERVIEW

9376

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. VestalThis report made on (date) December 3 1937

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1. Name Mrs. Ella Lebrecht
2. Post Office Address 1002 A
3. Residence address (or location) Lawton, Oklahoma.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 4 Year 70 yrs.
5. Place of birth Mississippi.

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6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____
Other information about father _____
7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____
Other information about mother _____
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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 _____

Ophelia D. Vestal
Investigator
December 3, 1937

Interview with
Mrs. Ella Lebrecht
Lawton, Oklahoma

I came to this tent city in July before the country opened, from Norman.

My husband and I had proved up on a farm in 1891, near Norman. We had four children, two girls and two boys. Here I lost my husband. As my brother, W. G. Maddox, was coming to this new country I thought a change might do me some good. I brought enough things to furnish my tent home, a herd of nine dairy cows, and a team which we drove through.

Our first camp was located on a creek just south of the present site of the Frisco Depot, and I started a dairy, using my wagon as a dairy wagon. As it was my intention to run a dairy, I started it in only a few days.

The water problem was next to be solved, and to run the "Lawton Dairy" the great need for water became serious. I got my brother to dig a well. It was nine feet deep when we struck fairly good tasting water in a good vein.

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I had plenty of water for my own use, to sell and to share with my neighbors. As I had brought my little boys with me, I gave them a bucket and they sold water for 5 cents a bucketful.

A large pen was built for my cows to be kept in at night. I never saw such beautiful tall grass in my life. Here I spent many days herding the cows, until the townsite was marked off, then I moved on westward, still running my dairy.

The first winter here was very cold and disagreeable. The Indians were friendly but very curious. They were used to being out in the open, but it seemed to me that they would freeze. They had such strange beliefs, such as making medicine at their dances. Paw Way was an Indian medicine maker.

This seemed to be a very lonesome country, too. The howls of wolves and coyotes were the most lonesome sounds I have ever heard. Sometimes I've heard women say they heard panthers near or they just knew that a band of Indians was surrounding them to murder them, but this was not true for I never heard of any trouble. It seems lots

of the older Indians had white people's scalps but they were not collected here.

There were many beautiful wild flowers, flowering shrubs, wild fruits and an abundance of wild game; which were of great assistance to the new home makers.

Hunting and fishing were a great sport for the townsmen and for the people of neighboring towns, as well as for our own men folk when they had time. My family always enjoyed going on outings in the Wichita Mountains. Here we saw many beautiful sights.

The people have named all the mountains, creeks and small bodies of water. Look Out Mountain has had its name for a long time.

In the early days on this smaller mountain, a house was built. The men worked in shifts, two staying there at a time to watch for any Indians who might come to surround them, while the Apaches were being held captives, especially. They would watch, too, lest the captives might try to escape. At nights it was not necessary for any men to stay there because the Indian captives were guarded very closely then. But some men decided they'd just as

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well stay at night, some one slipped up on them and they were killed. No trace of the murderer was ever found.