

WARE, LOTTIE BURNS

INTERVIEW

#4525

226

---

## BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

227

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ida B. LankfordThis report made on (date) June 2119371. Name Lottie Burns Ware,2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) 808 North Grant Street.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 19 Year 18885. Place of birth Heigler, Nebraska.6. Name of Father R. A. Burns Place of birth Birmingham,  
Alabama.Other information about father Farmer--Mason7. Name of Mother Sarah J. Burns Place of birth Timbo,  
ArkansasOther information about mother Housekeeper.

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 4.

WARE, LOTTIE BURNS. INTERVIEW. 4525.

Ida B. Lankford,  
Field worker,  
6-21-37

~~An interview with~~  
Mrs. Lottie Burns Ware,  
Cordell, Oklahoma.

I can remember the hurry and the excitement of packing up the wagons and starting for Oklahoma from Heigler, Nebraska, in April, 1893. We were in three covered wagons.

April, 1893, was windy, sandy and a typical spring month as Nebraska, Kansas, and Oklahoma know Spring. On the third day on the road we smelled smoke and the sky got smoky and hazy. As we neared the Canadian River, we became scared, for we could see a prairie fire and knew that if the fire jumped the river, we would all be burned up. So we hurried the horses down into the water until the danger was over. Then we drove on the rest of the day, and on the 19th of April, 1893, at sundown, we stopped our tired, fire-singed horses on our claim, two miles west and a half a mile south of what is now called Dill City, on a completely blackened prairie. We were a quarter of a mile from water, a little stream called Elk Creek.

The next day we began digging a dugout large enough for a fireplace in one end, three beds,

WARE, LOTTIE BURNS.

INTERVIEW.

4528

2

a table, stove and boxes that we had packed household goods, dishes and things in. We then dug a well for water; began plowing and planting to raise feed for the horses, cows, chickens and pigs which we were to buy later. We lived in this dugout for nearly four years; we had to ride or drive ten miles to a little post office, called Salem, for our mail.

Then as new neighbors settled near us, my mother was appointed postmistress of Burns. My father freighted supplies from El Reno, taking fourteen days to make the trip in rainy seasons. There were no bridges over any of the rivers. Indians were everywhere. While Father was on one of these freighting trips, the Indians went on the war-path up about fifteen miles north on Turkey Creek, now Foss. There we were, my mother and four small children. I was six years old. A good neighbor, Mr. Leverton, came to see about us and warned every one else in the neighborhood. He saw that we had guns ready and told us to stay in, with the doors locked. We hid under feather beds. Mother sat by the window,

guns ready, if the Indians came. My father heard about the trouble and left his wagons with six horses on the river, and came by stage to Cloud Chief, walked and ran the twenty-three miles to where he expected to find us all scalped, our barns burned, and horses and cows stolen. My mother saw him coming through the tall grass and thought he was an Indian, and was ready to shoot him, when he took off his hat and waved it at the house hoping we would see him. That was a happy meeting! The Indians were quieted by soldiers from the fort.

Next came our first sorrow, my three year old baby sister was taken sick with diphtheria. The doctor was twenty-three miles away. We drove there but she died before morning. She was buried in the new Cordell cemetery and was the first child to be buried there. Three others, two outlaws, and a deputy sheriff were the only other graves. The Indians were not the only dangers. Snakes, big ones, were everywhere. They swallowed prairie dogs, rabbits, alive and whole. One of our best horses was bitten three times on the nose by a snake but my father had remedies for things like that, so the horse lived.

One day we were frightened by a very large herd of long horned cattle coming toward us. Our feed crop was well up. The men folks were all gone; we had no horse to ride, so as to scare them away, Mother took an old black umbrella, starting toward them, slowly opening and shutting it at them. They stampeded in the other direction, and our feed was safe. Then my father built the fence around a hundred and sixty acres. Then, in a few years, he built a house.

We prospered and a family settled on every hundred and sixty acres. My father is now more than eighty, my mother seventy. They live near San Diego, California. Their names are R. A. and Sarah Burns. I was five years old in December, 1892, when we came here. Now, I am a grandmother.

I started to school about the age of seven. Our school house was a dugout about 16' X 20'. Mr. J. M. Armfield taught me my a b c 's. The pupils were of all ages, from first graders to grown men and women. I was as near to school as anyone and I walked three miles every day during school term. I never missed a day, neither was I tardy.