

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

OLNEY, ST. CLAIRE.

INTERVIEW

#9363.

Field Worker's name Mildred B. McFarland

This report made on (date) December first, 1937

1. Name St. Claire Olney

2. Post Office Address Edmond, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 429 south Broadway

4. DATE OF BIRTH: nth January Day 20 Year 1872

5. Place of birth McConnellsville, Ohio.

6. Name of Father Willard Davis Olney Place of birth Ohio

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Louisa Katherine Spence Place of birth Ohio

Olney.
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 Four sheets.

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Mildred B. McFarland,
Interviewer
December 1, 1937.

At the age of seventeen years, I was living with my parents in Abilene, Texas.

Father and I started out in a covered wagon the first day of May, 1889, for Oklahoma Territory. We arrived in Oklahoma City May 10th, having traveled over the Old Chisholm Trail from Red River to the South Canadian. We brought enough supplies to camp out and nothing more.

A "Sooner" had staked a claim two miles south of Edmond, but had never filed on it. Father gave him \$25.00 to release it and then filed on it himself.

The first thing we did was dig a hole 10 x 16 ft. We built the sides above the ground of pine boards and covered it with cottonwood slabs and sod. We made several stools of split logs and a table. The stove was purchased in Edmond. We bought a few things along as we could afford them.

Mother came on the train about a month later. It seemed like a year to me, so I had to do the cooking until she came.

There was a draw on the place and for about a year we drank creek water. As the ground had never been broken, we could not raise a very big crop the first year. I experimented with

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cane and watermelons. The next year we made sorghum molasses for all the neighborhood.

One day I was plowing with a small team of mules when suddenly they stopped, almost throwing me over the plow handles. I looked up between the mules and there stood three of the prettiest deer I had ever seen. Of course, they ran away as soon as they spied me.

I planted a quantity of peanuts the first year, too, but the prairie chickens ate almost all of them.

One day father and I went over in the blackjacks east of Edmond to see about getting some wood. I had my rifle with me. Suddenly a big wild turkey gobbler flew out of a tree just in front of us, and we had turkey to eat for a week.

There were quite a few buffalo wallows on our place. I have waded through many of them while plowing.

After the first year, camp meetings were held not far from us.

The greatest amusement for all the young folks in the community was singingschool. We would gather at different homes and sing half the night.

I was twenty-one when the Cherokee Strip was opened for settlement. I decided I wanted a place of my own. A friend,

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Andy Weiss, and I started out on horseback to make the run. We started six miles west of Orlando and ran thirty-two miles. I staked a claim twenty-two miles northwest of Perry. The cornerstone had been disfigured in a way that marked school land. I went on and never filed on it. Later I found it was not school land, but someone else had it by that time. Disheartened, I returned to Edmond.

I made the Run in the Kickapoo country, but lost out there, too.

I contented myself then on my father's farm. I specialized in wheat and oats. We marketed them in Edmond and Oklahoma City.

We attended church in Edmond. "Prairie Dell" school was about one mile from our place. Part of the time church was held there.

About twice a month the neighbors would hold "literaries," spelling bees, and box socials there.

There were never any Negroes allowed in Edmond. I saw ^{the} first one driven out of town. A large wagon sheet was brought to the main street and the negro placed in it. A large crowd of men held the sheet and bounced him high into the air, sometimes catching him, but most of the times letting him hit the ground. When they tired of this, they turned him loose and started chasing him out

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of town, throwing stones and tin cans at him. From then on no negro stayed in Edmond after sundown.

In 1901, I went to Kiowa County and bought a relinquishment on a claim from a Mr. Kincaid. I homesteaded it and when I had proved up on it, I bought another farm, which I sold. Then I bought another.

The old homestead is located twelve miles southwest of Hobart. I still own it.

I was in Hobart when Carrie Nation was there. I attended a meeting where he was speaking. She damaged the saloons and poured out whiskey by the barrel.

I moved back to Edmond in 1929 and rented both my farms. I bought the home I now live in. I am getting old and have the desire to see as much of the United States as possible. I travel most of the time. I enjoy thinking back to the times we started our pioneer days. We worked hard to have a home, but were happy through it all.