

HAGER, EMELINE.

INTERVIEW

#8835

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

HAGER, EMELINE. INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker's name Elsie A. Norris,

This report made on (date) October 19, 1937 1937

1. Name Mrs. Emeline Hager,

2. Post Office Address Guthrie, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 512 E. Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 21 Year 1851

5. Place of birth Platte County, Missouri, near Platte City

6. Name of Father J. D. Prunty Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Clarissa Brown Place of birth Massachusetts

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 _____

Field Worker, Elsie A. Norris,
October 19, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Emeline Hager,
Guthrie, Oklahoma.

I was born near Platte City in Platte County, Missouri, December 21, 1851. While I was quite small my parents moved to Iowa. In less than a year we moved to Illinois and from there to Johnson County, Kansas, in 1865. I went to school regularly, learned quickly and began teaching school when quite young. All through my school life I remember how I loved to spell. I got a big thrill when I was past eighty years old. I entered a spelling contest at Coyle and was fortunate in winning it. The prize was a beautiful quilt which I prize very highly. Mr. Hager was the winner in a similar contest at Kingfisher more than thirty years ago. He was given a quilt as a prize, too. It seemed to run in the family to be able to spell words correctly. My children were both excellent spellers and my grandchildren were good at it, too.

While I was teaching school in Johnson County, Kansas, I met Mr. Hager and we were married in Spring Hill, Johnson

County, Kansas, December 5, 1872. Mr. Hager had served in the United States Army the last year of the Civil War and was pensioned for his services. After his death the pension was paid to me, for which I am thankful. Mr. Hager's eyesight failed him long before he died and he was almost totally blind before his death.

At the time of the opening of "Old Oklahoma" to settlement we were living in Sumner County, Kansas. Mr. Hager was in the famous "Run," securing a good claim near Kingfisher. After filing on the claim Mr. Hager came home. In August he went back to the claim, taking Milt, then sixteen years old, and me with him. Mr. Hager started in to make some improvements. He plowed a few acres and set up some logs, stockade-fashion, for a house. This showed that we intended to make a home there. Then we went back to Kansas. In October, 1889, we loaded two wagons with things we would need most and went back to the claim, this time to stay. We took with us some chickens and two good cows; one of these cows died the first winter and the other the following spring. We thought their death was caused from eating too much dry feed. We surely missed the milk and butter

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as it was some time before we got another cow. Finally Mr. Hager got a chance to trade a shotgun for a cow, which proved to be a good milker. Later that Fall, Mr. Hager went to Kansas bringing back feed for the stock, a pig, potatoes and other food that we needed badly. By this time winter had set in and when he forded the Salt Fork River he got stuck and had to leave the wagon in the river all night. The pig was in a crate on the back of the wagon, and cold as it was, Mr. Hager waded to the wagon and fed it that night and the next morning. He stayed all night with some cowboys.

At first we lived in a tent borrowed from a neighbor who had built a house so he could spare his tent to us. However, we soon had our log house ready to live in. It was big enough for two rooms but we did not partition it for some time. Everyone felt the need of a Sunday School and as our house afforded the most room, the people of the community met there each Sunday for nearly a year. The next year a log school house served for Sunday School and Church as well as for school.

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On July 10, 1890, our baby girl was born to us in the log house. That fall, Mr. Hager, who had been a teacher in Kansas, took the school at Dover to teach and we sent Milton back to Kansas to go to school.

The next year good crops were raised. Our garden was very good. I remember we had lovely peas. One day I picked and shelled a pan full of peas and as we were going to town that afternoon, I took them with me and sold them for 25 cents. I was quite happy as this was the first money we had made on the claim. That very evening, just after we got home, a terrible hail storm swept through the country, ruining our lovely garden and the wheat crop, too. However, sweet potatoes made a pretty good crop as did our tomato plants and we had plenty of fine tomatoes. We got some one to can them for us on the shares.

I did all I could to make our house look nice. I remember how hard I worked papering the walls with old newspapers and Mr. Hager was always reading something from the walls.

Laurine grew up and worked with us. She helped me carry water for the plants, ran after the cows when they

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got out and helped fix the fence to keep the cows from getting out. Mr. Hager's cousin told her she should have been a boy, she was always doing a boy's work. When Laurine finished the grades we moved to Kingfisher to give her high school and college advantages as Kingfisher had a college at that time. She taught school for a number of years then married John Fry and now lives in Coyle, where she still teaches expression and music. In the meantime, Milt married and moved to Lovell where he taught school for a number of years. After his wife died, leaving six small children, we moved to Lovell to help him care for them. Laurine gave up her school and took one near Lovell so we could all be together.

We later moved to Marshall as it had better schools, churches, etc., and Laurine had a position in the schools there. While we lived in Marshall, Mr. Hager was taken sick and died. I lived on in Marshall for awhile then came to Guthrie in 1923.

Except the last few years I have had one or more of my grandchildren with me. Now I am entirely alone except for my dog and my cats. I have lived a long life and have undergone many hardships but I have also had much happiness

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in my life. My neighbors are lovely to me, my daughter and my son visit me frequently and my radio furnishes me entertainment. I also have ten granddaughters and a grandson whom I see quite often as well as four great-granddaughters and one great-grandson.