

PAVY, NELLIE B.

INTERVIEW.

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PAVY, NELLIE B.

BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Mrs Nora Lerrin, El Reno, Oklahoma

This report made on (date) August 16th, 1937

1. Name Mrs Nellie B. (Gardner) Pavy.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 520 South Roberts.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 11 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Fairbury, Illinois.

6. Name of Father John Gardner. Place of birth Glasgow Scotland Sept 12, 1838

Other information about father died December 18th, 1899.

7. Name of Mother Annie (Arbuckle) Gardner. Place of birth Glasgow Scotland. Oct. 12th, 1837

Other information about mother Died December 5th, 1922

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Nora Lorrin,  
Interviewer  
August 16, 1937

Interview with  
Mrs. Nellie B. Pavy (Gardner)  
520 South Roberts  
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mr. and Mrs. Gardner were married before they came to America and had two children, a boy and a girl; the little girl was four years old and the little boy was two years old when they came to America. They landed in Chicago on July 4th, 1868, and went at once to Fairbury, Illinois, and stayed at that place until Nellie B. was thirteen years of age. Mr. Gardner worked as a coal miner while living at Fairbury.

Later, five other children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, two boys and three girls.

As the boys grew older, they needed more land and Walter Gardner decided to go to Oklahoma. On September 22nd, 1891, he went to the Sac and Fox opening.

He did not get a claim although George Todd who was in Guthrie tried to help Walter Gardner get a claim but the land was too rough to suit him and he did not take up a claim.

George Todd was a carpenter at Osage City, Kansas and he came down to Oklahoma in 1889, obtained some lots in Guthrie,

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stayed there awhile and then went to Oklahoma City, entered the lumber and real estate business and became a millionaire.

Walter Gardner came to the second opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho opening on foot. He made the run south from the South Canadian River down by Minco. He ran over good land for miles and staked a claim on the edge of the hills thirteen miles west and a mile north of El Reno. He had got in with some men from Texas and made the run with these Texas friends in a wagon. There were four men in the group and they all took claims. When they went to Oklahoma City, it was found that the three men who were with Walter Gardner already owned land in Texas and they were not allowed to file on the land they had staked.

Walter Gardner, Mrs. Pavy's brother wrote home to his family in Kansas and told them that if they wanted farms to come on down as there were three good ones waiting.

Mr. Gardner went down to investigate and sent word back for the younger son, who was just twenty-one years old, and his oldest daughter to come but the older sister did not want to go unless her sister Nellie would go too. James went on down into the territory and Mr. Gardner returned and found that

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both of the girls wanted to take claims. He said the only reason he had for not wanting both girls to come to the territory was that it seemed like getting too much land in one family, but he said if they wanted to go and file on those claims they could do so.

Nellie Gardner was a school teacher and her sister was a widow with three children. They came down on the train, and were met by their brother who had hired a rig to take them out to his claim. They came back to El Reno next day and went to a lawyer's office to see if their claims had been taken. The brother told them not to speak the numbers of their land out loud in the lawyer's office as there were men in the office all the time who were trying to find out the numbers of land that had not yet been filed on. They wrote the numbers of their land on a card and when they went into the office they handed the lawyer their card and two men deliberately walked behind the lawyer's chair and jotted the numbers down. They all left the office at the same time and went to Oklahoma City on the same train and upon arriving in Oklahoma City, those men went up one side of the street and the girls went up the other side on their way to the land office each couple

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trying to out walk the other.

The men reached the land office first; there were several booths in which the filing business was being enacted and the men chose the first one they came to but there was another party ahead of them and the other booths were seemingly full but when the girls came into the land-office they saw a booth away in the end of the building that looked deserted and they took a chance and went into it. The lawyer was there but did not have a client at the time. The land office proper was down stairs in the basement and the lawyer told them that he would run down and see if those claims were taken, and save them the filing fee in case they had already been filed on. He came back in a short time and said that one of them was clear. That was Nellie Gardner's claim but the claim on which her sister wished to file had a rejected filing against it. The lawyer fixed up the claim with the clear title first and then the other and they then went down and put their claims on file. The two women had just gotten their business finished when the two men who had been racing with them came into the booth with their papers to file on claims. Their lawyer went to the books

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and looked but there was nothing they could do about it.

By choosing the first booth they came to these men lost the advantage gained by getting to the land office ahead of the girls.

Nellie Gardner's older sister got the title to her claim cleared up in a couple of years; the man who had first filed on it had other land and the Government would not let him have this claim.

After the girls filed on their land they went back to Kansas. Nellie taught a term of school and came back in six months; she came in November and stayed the necessary length of time and then returned to Kansas and came back to the claim in the spring. She had a little house built that was made with foot wide boards, with the cracks battened. It was a one room affair 10 by 14 feet. She had five acres of ~~ground broken out~~ the first spring and the next year she had ten acres broken out and planted in corn and she raised enough corn to sell \$5.00 worth of shucked corn. The first two years she carried water from her brother's place which was not far away. Then she had a well drilled on her own place. She also planted an orchard but it died. She taught two terms

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of school at "Rock Dale" school but not consecutively because she taught a term of school in Kansas between her two terms in Oklahoma.

For the social side of life there was preaching once a month, Sunday School every Sunday, Sunday School picnics, parties and literary societies. Nellie Gardner walked two and one half miles to school and back home again, and she also walked to Sunday School and home again making an average of thirty miles a week she walked regularly for the two terms that she taught at "Rock Dale." In 1889, Nellie Gardner married Charles T. Pavy and about a year later sold her claim, as her husband had homesteaded a better one than the one she owned. She bought another farm with the money from her first claim and still owns it. It is located ten miles west and a mile north of El Reno. Her first claim was twelve miles west and two miles north of El Reno. Her husband's claim was nine miles west and two miles north of El Reno and just two and a half miles due south of Calumet.

Charles T. Pavy came up from Texas and staked his claim. He had been working for a man in Texas who let him have a

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horse and saddle to come to the opening and when he was running for his claim he kept running until he saw the people coming from the opposite direction, he then jumped off his horse and staked his claim. Later, he found out that if he had staked on either side of the claim that he did stake he would have been on an allotment or school land as there was an allotment on one side of him and school land on the other. It was lucky that he drove his stake just where he did.

Mr. Pavy sold his horse and saddle to get the money for the filing fee and stood in line for two days before he got a chance to file.

In his absence, another man built a three room house on his place, thinking that by so doing he could take the claim away from Mr. Pavy.

Men shot around his house and disturbed him a good deal trying to scare him away. Mr. Pavy shot through the walls at them several times when they were prowling around. These other men finally gave up and Mr. Pavy let them take their house away. He worked for \$2.50 a week for quite a while in order to get the money to keep the farm, then he

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went back to Texas and worked for a while for the man who let him have the horse and saddle to make the run.

Mr. and Mrs. Pavy lived on his homestead until his death in 1933.

The El Reno Waterworks Company  
Choctaw and Foreman Streets.

Mrs. Pavy's brother worked on the standpipe at El Reno which is one hundred and fifty feet high. It was hard to find workers because it was dangerous to climb so high. There was quite a lot of game in El Reno when the Gardner family came.

There were lots of deer, although usually there were only one or two together. One morning when Mrs. Pavy was going to the home of her oldest brother she saw seven deer in a bunch.

There were a lot of quails, rabbits and prairie chickens and there were lots of snakes, rattle snakes and other kinds. A little girl was bitten by a rattler. She did not die; her mother sucked the wound, and turned a bottle of turpentine over it. They then sent word to the father of the present Dr. Powell for information as to what to do for her. He looked over his medical books, but

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did not have anything that was recommended to doctor her with. They then sent word to a blacksmith named Rogers for some whisky and the messenger drank the whisky on the way back and they had to send for some more. It took a half pint of whiskey to make the little girl drunk. Her ankle and leg swelled to almost two or three times its natural size and the foot and ankle turned black. The spot on her instep where the rattle snake bit her, rotted out, but she got well.

Mrs. Pavy says "The last rattle snake I saw I was coming up from the hen house out on our farm and I saw something that I thought was a stick lying straight across the path. I stepped over it, and it coiled sprang and struck without giving a warning rattle. I killed it with a hoe, but did not know until the next day that it was a rattle snake."

Mr. and Mrs. Pavy traded in El Reno at "Barrett's Grocery," "Wilson's Grocery" and at "Cook and Sochriver's Grocery and General Merchandise store"

There was a little country store kept by a man named Ira Howe, not far from where the Pavys lived, and another store kept by "Rice Newport" which was called

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"Rice Newport's Store;" this store was twelve miles west and four miles north of El Reno. The first four years Mr. and Mrs. Pavy got their mail at Fort Reno. Then a woman named Mrs. Cowdrey conducted a Post Office near the present town of Calumet. There were several names for that Post Office which were sent in to the government. Mrs. Cowdrey sent the name "Calumet" and it was adopted. Her store was a mile and a half south and a mile west of the present town of Calumet which got its name from her little store and Post Office. Mrs Cowdrey kept that store and Post Office because she was a widow and all alone and it was company for her.

She was post mistress at the town of Calumet after the Post Office was moved there.

There used to be lots of depressions in the prairie that were said to be buffalo wallows; these depressions would hold water for a time after a rain and the grass in them would nearly always be greener than the grass surrounding them. There were also buffalo bones scattered around over the country and for years the early settlers followed Indian trails instead of roads.

People used to hold church in the homes before there

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were any church buildings. Church was held often in the home of a man named Phillips. The Red Rock church was

the first to be built in this vicinity. The Red Rock church was ten miles west and a mile north of El Reno.

Mr. and Mrs. Pavy have two children. Mr. and Mrs. Gardner, Mrs. Pavy's parents, are both buried in the "Red Rock Cemetery."

The Gardner family had all moved to Oklahoma by 1899.

They stayed on their farm until 1928 and then came to El Reno to the home where Mrs. Pavy now lives at 520 South Roberts Street, El Reno.