

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

PITTENGER, MARY ALICE CROSBY

INTERVIEW

4697

Field Worker's name Naomi L. Garringer,

This report made on (date) June 21, 1937

1. Name Mary Alice Crosby Pittenger

2. Post Office Address Medford, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 17 Year 1879

5. Place of birth Kansas

6. Name of Father Frank Crosby Place of birth Illinois

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary Alice Manning Place of birth Ohio.

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 3

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Naomi L. Garringer,
Field Worker,
June 21, 1937.

An Interview with Mary
Alice Crosby Pittenger,
Medford, Oklahoma.

I came here in 1894 from Wichita, Kansas, with my uncle, Mr. Crosby, when I was fourteen years of age.

Mr. Crosby made the race when the Cherokee Strip was opened, September 16, 1893. He didn't get a claim so bought one six and one-half miles south of Wakita. In the spring he built a frame house and the family came in June. Mr. Crosby did freighting through the Cherokee Strip before it was opened. It was such a lonely looking place, no trees. I was the first teacher in District 57, Grant County. I was fourteen years old at the time.

At that time houses were mostly soddies or dugouts and were few and far between.

In the spring of 1895 enough settlers had come to make it possible to have a school. In District No. 57, located five miles from Wakita, a dugout in the creek bank was made and then the school board set out to get a teacher. They finally arrived at my home and stated their

PITTINGER, MARY ALICE CROSBY

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4697

-2-

mission and in a joking manner I told them I would teach the school. They asked me what salary I wanted and I told them \$15.00 per month. The joke turned on me, for they would not let me back out.

In order to draw the school allowance for the district, at least a three months term must be held. I went to the County Superintendent and received a temporary certificate and was all set for the opening of the school term, about the first of March. The schoolhouse was about three and one-half miles from my home and most of the time I walked both ways, cutting across the prairie. This school was given the name of Prairie Queen. The Cherokee Outlet was settled by people from nearly all states. On the first day of school the parents brought their children, with boxes for desks and the books they had used in the state from which they had come. There were about thirty pupils and nearly all grades, some more advanced than I. School closed in May. In later years one of the patrons said that was the most successful term taught. In later years one of my former pupils became Superintendent of the first Rural Consolidated

PITTINGER, MARY ALICE GROSBY

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4697

-3-

school in Oklahoma. I was married the following year after
my school was out and lived in a little sod house on a claim.
I was very young and stayed on the claim with my small baby
while my husband worked in Kansas.