

SEGER, BESSIE

INTERVIEW.

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

Field Worker's name Maude M. Fink

This report made on (date) April 29, 1937

1. Name Bessie Seger

2. Post Office Address Colony, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Colony, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 2 Year 1890

5. Place of birth Darlington, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father John H. Seger Place of birth Ohio  
 Other information about father Mason. Started for new settlement on Christmas Eve, 1872.

7. Name of Mother Mary Esther Nichols Seger Place of birth Pennsylvania  
Oct. 6, 1875.  
 Other information about mother A teacher, began at the age of 16.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Miss Seger has had wonderful experience in her life. Her father was a worker among the Indians and the Indians thought of him as one of their members. Miss Seger loves the Indians and hates to see them mistreated as some people are doing them today.

Interview with Miss Bessie Seger  
Colony, Oklahoma

In 1886 John H. Seger had a following of five hundred Indians, and he told them they were going to a new land; the River Jordan. They crossed the Canadian River at Bridgeport, and when they got across, all the Indians stopped. Mr. Seger thought they were going to turn on him and go back, but the Indians said they were "in a new land now and all the old customs were past and new ones begun."

Dead Woman's Canyon

When the people came from El Reno to these other forts they would make it to a certain canyon to stay all night. There was water for their teams there, and water was scarce at that time. When the Indians stayed all night at this point, Lefthand's wife died and they buried her beside the road. Ever since then, it has been known as the Dead Woman's Canyon. When anyone started out they were told to go as far as Dead Woman's Canyon and stay all night. This was in 1892.

The first pioneer school was in a dugout. Dr. Baldard was the first teacher. Mr. Suttons is the teacher now.

Later they had a sawmill at Colony and they sawed lumber and built a school house. Mr. Frank Thompson was

the first teacher in the new school. Later they moved the school house to Gordon Pigg's farm. Miss Baney was the teacher there for thirteen years. Instead of building a new building, they just built around the walls of the Pigg house.

Mr. Seger's record stands the highest in Washington D. C. for his actual service to the Indians, teaching them to work, etc.

#### Ghost Mound - How Named

An Indian Chief's wife died and was buried there and every night this Indian Chief would go there and pray and talk to her spirit. The Mound had little holes in it, and one night he was down praying and the bats got to making funny noises and flying around. This scared the Indian, and he ran all the way to Colony. He said it was his wife's ghost, and he never went back. Ever since then the place has been called Ghost Mound.

#### Indian Tradition

The Indians lived just like animals. They wore no clothing; had no love for each other; and when they had children they acted toward them like the children didn't belong to them. The Great Spirit became angry with them and sent a great flood. This caused them to change and be like they are now.

An Indian woman had lost her baby. She found a panther and let it nurse her. This was the beginning of love. The panther would go out and bring in food and would not let anything harm them. They began to learn how to tan hides, form love for each other. They built their tents in horseshoe shapes so they could be together.

Bessie Seger is the only girl on record who has made a run and filed on a place; on March 3rd when the Territory was opened up, she was just old enough the day before.

The things they had to eat were beans, salt pork and bread, made out of sour dough. The stage route in December, 1880, was driven by Mr. Seger, from Darlington and Weatherford, to Hobeta, Texas. His guide was Little Robe, and they carried the mail in a buckboard. Mrs. Seger kept house at Hammon and the only company Mrs. Seger had was a hound, who would stand at the window and keep the wolves away.

The Indians don't like Custer for a name. They want the name of Custer County changed. They think Custer is an evil spirit.

Mr. Seger fired the pistol when they started the run. The Indians wanted Mr. Seger and his wife and five children each to have one hundred and sixty acres of land, but Mr. Seger said, "No."

Mr. Seger was the head of the school at Colony. He made it a beautiful place. In 1894, off the school ground, they raised thirty loads of produce outside of what they used at the school. All this was hauled by Indians to town.

There were lots of turkey and deer.

Mr. and Mrs. Seger are buried at Fairview.

Lena Seger was born in the first frame house in Washita County. Her daughter, now Mrs. Crank, was born in the same house.