

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

Field Worker's name Zaldee B. Bland.

This report made on (date) December 17, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Mary Ethel McCord.

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 420 East Cypress St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 8 Year 1877.

5. Place of birth Kentucky

6. Name of Father John D. Burnett Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father Southern Gentleman.

7. Name of Mother Alice Jane Brow Place of birth Kentucky

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 7.

McCord, Mary Ethel

INTERVIEW. 9466.

Zaidee B. Bland,
Journalist.
December 17, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Mary Ethel McCord.
Altus, Oklahoma.
Born November 8, 1877.
Father--John D. Burnett
Mother--Alice Jane Brow

I was reared near Vernon, Texas, but never lived north of Red River until I married Mr. McCord. Mr. McCord had a homestead right, just east of Elmer one and one half miles. He bought out the right from a man who already had a house built. The house was bought in Vernon, Texas, and torn partly down and loaded on wagons and moved to our land. We lived on this place until we proved up before we sold it.

~~I had a real castle for these days. Four rooms~~
and a front and a back porch with glass windows. The house still stands. I am a real pioneer child though. My parents came from Kentucky when I was three years old and Father let me ride a horse most all the way just because I wanted to. I was almost able to ride alone by the time I could walk alone.

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My father had a stud-horse that was as gentle as a cat and when he was to be away from home all day I was allowed to lead this horse to water. I always had a desire to ride him. His back was so broad that it was a perfect seat for me and I was often set on his back when my daddy led him. One day Father was gone and I went to lead Dick to water. He always wore a halter. I climbed up the side of the manger and got astride his back. I had my daddy's quirt hanging to my arm. I rode Dick down to water and when I started back I wanted to see how fast I could make him go so I began to use the quirt, first on one side of him and then on the other. Mother heard us coming and came to the door. She was almost frightened to death when she saw me but when Dick got to the house he stopped. He stopped rather quickly but he was so big and broad that I did not tumble. I could stick to the back of any horse though I have had horses to pitch with me a lot of times. I was my daddy's girl, I always

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thought, and I went with him on every occasion when he could possibly take me.

Once, when all the streams were swollen after a big rain, I was riding with my daddy looking for bogged cattle when we came up with several cowboys who were also looking for cattle that might be in trouble. The cowboys got off of their horses and dropping their reins they, with Daddy, went on down farther on one of the creeks, telling me to stay on my horse with the other horses. I got tired of waiting and went to find Daddy. I found their clothes on the bank of the creek and began to scream. I thought, of course, Daddy had drowned; I was too small to even think that they might be in swimming which they were. My daddy was Line Boss for Mr. Wagner for years. We have had Mr. Wagner in our home for weeks during round up time. I still have a brother who works for Mr. Wagner's heirs. Mr. Wagner himself has not been dead but a little while. We only had cow trails all through the tall grass. My

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daddy always took his shot gun when ever he rode. The wild turkeys were every where on the prairie. Once my daddy came onto a drove of young gobblers going in single file down one of these cow paths. He shot into them and killed twenty with the one shot. We liked fried turkey better than most anything when they were young and tender.

I have seen a lot of Indians and we have had them in our home but they never took anything nor tried to frighten us in any way. Indians are always very curious and we have had them come into our home and finger everything and pick up the things and look them over. Mother would always give them some gift if they seemed to admire something especially. Mother always thought that her never showing any fear of them was the reason they never harmed us in any way for others complained about their Indian visitors.

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When the Indians found that we were not afraid of them they often came when they were passing. It was nothing uncommon to see an Indian peeping through a window at night when there was a light.

Father kept two big packs of hounds, grey hounds to run wolves and long eared fox hounds to hunt with. The dogs had to be cooked for each day the same as the cowboys. Mother always cooked big pans of corn bread for the dogs and they were always turned out to hunt for their meat. If Father did not have time to go hunting with them they were allowed to hunt alone for a while and then some of us would call them in with a horn. They knew the call home on that horn as well as a child would know his name. Sometimes, if they treed something near enough home, I would get my horse and lope over to see what it was and if it was something worth while I would make it jump from the tree so that the hounds could get it for their meal or sometimes I would bring the catch home if it was a big fat coon.

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When I was small we had a baby coyote that we raised from such a small cub that we had to feed him milk. He was as gentle with us children as a dog but never got safe for a grown person to pet. The coyote was gentlest with my baby brother who was just learning to walk. He never snapped at brother but sometimes he would get out of patience with us older children and snap at us. He was ill tempered with grown-ups always, so we had to let the dogs kill him.

One of the proudest moments of my life was when my husband came home from Vernon with a rubber tired buggy hitched on behind his wagon. This buggy was to be mine exclusively. We did not have a very gentle horse at that time but did have a little skittish mare that I thought a great deal of that was a "goer" but was not to be trusted too far; nevertheless, I begged Mr. McCord to trust me with the two little boys to drive over to Vernon to see my mother.

One of my boys was six months old and the other a little over two years old. There were no roads

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except through pastures; gates had to be opened and shut. One morning bright and early the mare was hitched to the new buggy and I got in with the two boys and started to Vernon. It took me most all day to go the sixteen miles. I had to ford the river.

When I came to a gate I would drive up to the gate, get out, place my baby on his little blanket on the grass near by, open the gate, let the two year old boy hold the lines while I led the horse through, tie the horse, pick up my baby, shut the gate, untie the horse and climb back into the buggy, take the reins and drive on to another gate where I would repeat the same performance. I saw a lot of wild cattle, coyotes and antelope on my way but seldom met a person.