

**INDEX CARDS**

Openings--Old Oklahoma  
Kingfisher  
Water--Oklahoma Territory  
Horse thieves--Oklahoma Territory  
Pioneer life--Oklahoma Territory

Field Worker: Thad Smith, Jr.  
April 5, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs. Louisa E. McGee (White)  
301 North 6th Street  
Chickasha, Oklahoma

BORN Skiler County, Missouri  
October 29, 1859

PARENTS Father, Joseph Caldwell, Tennessee  
Buried near St. Joseph, Missouri  
Mother, Susan Snook, Ohio  
Buried in Chickasha

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My husband, nine-year old daughter and I were living in Kansas when we read about the opening of Oklahoma to be April 22, 1889. My husband wanted to make the run. So he sold everything we owned, but a buggy and team, a wagon and team, and our person belongings. We drove from western Kansas and the last three days of our trip, we had to drive day and night to make the line. We arrived just a few minutes before noon. As we had not eaten any breakfast, we got our cooking utensils out started cooking. When the meal was half finished a soldier rode by on a horse and said for every one to be ready to run in ten minutes. There sure was a hustle and bustle. Everybody was anxious to be off.

There were people there from every where. Some were horse back, some in buggies, some riding burros, some driving oxen to wagons. There were placards on most of the covered wagons saying "Oklahoma or bust".

My husband said he would take the buggy and team to make the run, and for my daughter and me to follow in the wagon.

When the shots were fired, by the soldiers, as the signal

to go, every body started south. My daughter and I followed at a leisurely gait.

People could be seen driving stakes all over the prairie. Every now and then we would see a dead horse by the side of the road, that had broken its leg and had been shot. We also saw some wagons and buggies, by the side of the road that had broken down wheels, caused by collisions in the race. That night, several of us camped together. I sat up all night to watch the horses, afraid the Indians would steal them. The next morning we came to the Red Fork river. There were stakes driven in the river bed to mark the way, for those crossing. There was a man with a wagon and team there. I asked him if he would splice teams with me, he said he would. So he hitched his horses in front of ours. We made it across all right, but the river bed sure was rough. There must have been holes and rocks in the river as the horses would stumble and nearly fall. Not long after we crossed the river, my husband met us. He told us he had staked a business lot and a residential lot in Kingfisher.

There were eight or ten thousand people in Kingfisher, and only one building which was the land office. It was a frame building without a roof.

When we got to Kingfisher my husband took the bed off the wagon and started to Guthrie to get some lumber to build a shack.

We opened a restaurant, a few days after getting to Kingfisher. We got our drinking water out of John's Creek, not very far east of Kingfisher. Our meals consisted mostly of beans and soup, but they sold very readily for twenty five cents each.

There were lots of horse<sup>s</sup> stolen while we were there.

Usually after the owner had posted a reward of fifteen dollars or such, some white man would come in and say he had seen some horses that answered the description, near some Indian's camp. But that he would get the horses for the reward. Of course the white men were doing the stealing and laying it on the Indians.

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My husband kept looking for a claim, and finally staked out a claim on the Canadian river. Southeast of Union City. When he made a trip down to put living quarters on his claim, the river was up and there were about six inches of water all over his claim. So he talked with the land agent, and the agent told him that a man named Salt Creek Johnson had said that if some desirable man, with a family wanted his place they could have it. So we got his claim, located on mile east of Union City, the fall of 1889. Salt Creek Johnson said that one hundred and sixty acres was not enough land for him to make a living on.

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My husband built a half dugout. The size was about ten by fourteen. He plowed some sod, and used the sod as the upper part of the walls. The walls extended about four feet above the ground level, and were about twelve inches thick, made out of sod blocks which were about sixteen or eighteen inches long. My husband plastered the inside of the dugout with clay. We had a shingle roof. The shingles were freighted from Guthrie, and a dirt floor, but we covered this floor with native grass, and then put down a carpet over the grass. We had brought the carpet with us from Western Kansas.

My husband broke out about one hundred acres of land, and

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148

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sowed it in wheat. The first two years we were on the place it  
 did not grow a very good crop, but the following two years, we  
 made lots of grain.

In 1894, we sold our farm and moved to Chickasha. My  
 husband built a hotel, and rented it out, and he ran a livery barn.

I have lived in Chickasha in the same house since moving  
 here.

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