

SMITH, MAGGIE MAY MOHLER.

INTERVIEW

8827

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

SMITH, MAGGIE MAY MOHLER.

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Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan

This report made on (date) September 22, 1937

1. Name Maggie May Mohler Smith.

2. Post Office Address Wakita, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 1 block south of Main Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 17 Year 1875

5. Place of birth Astoria, Fulton County, Illinois.

6. Name of Father John Burgard Place of birth York, Pennsylvania.

Other information about father Mason

7. Name of Mother Emma Saurbaugh Place of birth York, Pennsylvania

Other information about mother House wife.

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 4

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Elizabeth L. Duncan.
September 22, 1937.
Interviewer.

Interview with Maggie May Mohler Smith,
Wakita, Oklahoma.
Born February 17, 1875
Father-John Burgard,
Mother-Emma Saurbaugh.

Maggie May Mohler was born in Astoria, Fulton County, Illinois. She lived there until she was two years old when her mother and she moved to Hill City, Graham County, Kansas, where her mother homesteaded. In order to make a living, Maggie began to cook for a railroad crew. There Maggie met a man named Joseph Anderson whom she married. When the railroad crew moved on to Russell Springs, Logan County, Kansas, her mother cooked for the crew six months. They they went to Republican City, Nebraska, and ran a hotel. Then Maggie's stepfather wanted to come down here to homestead.

He came down to file but had to stand in line four days, and paid as high as 25 cents for a cup of coffee and 20 cents for hamburgers and the meat was spoiled on top of that. They paid 5 cents a cup for water. The people would come along the line selling this food and the people stand-

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ing in line would give that much money in order to keep their place in line to register without losing out. It took him fifteen minutes to make the run, on September 16, 1893. Mr. Anderson came on down to make the run together with his brother, leaving the family located in a Dunkard settlement three miles from Nickerson, Kansas, in a small three roomed house. He left the family here so the children could go to school.

The same horse, Pasco, that had won a claim in the Old Oklahoma Race, nine miles south of Oklahoma City, also won for the Andersons a claim, known as the "Ed Garrett farm," five and one-half miles north of Wakita. After the race, the two brothers made their way back to the place where the family was camping near Nickerson, Kansas. That was a hard, long, cold winter. About New Year's they were making preparation to move. They started the first of February. West of Kingman, Kansas, they were overtaken with one of the old time fierce blizzards of history. They were fortunate in finding shelter in an old deserted one-room ranch house, with an open basement where they made shelter for their horses,

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storing the chickens in the attic, above their heads, while they shifted through the storm to sustain life. It was over a week before the sun ever shone.

Then they gathered up their belongings and started out through the heavy snow drifts on their way to the "Strip" again. Reaching Mound Miller's hill, they could see for miles a bare, uninhabited, long stretch of land. So in the late afternoon they reached their "staked claim", a cold, hungry bunch, but happy and thankful for the land. They pitched their tent. A few days passed and they had their twelve by sixteen foot dugout, plastered with gyp taken out of the bank on Crooked Creek. They burned native coal. By the last of February, they had their corn planted and up. It turned yellow from the freeze, but made the finest crop ever. They broke every foot of sod with a sod plow using Pasco and Old Humpy, (the most deformed horse in history) Mr. Anderson had given \$5.00 for him. He was a camel-backed horse, yet healthy and good to work.

They were blessed with good gardens, corn and melons, one cow, a few chickens, sorghum molasses and corn bread.

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They lived. While flour was 50 cents a sack, they had to be conservative. Maggie worked out for 50 cents a week and bought lumber enough for a floor in their dugout.

This made them feel very happy. They began to live with their social circle, Sunday School and church in the Tucker home, with singing school and "literary" in the old sod house owned by Grandma Phoebus. Lew Bickerdike was their musical instructor.

Mrs. Smith still resides in Wakita, Oklahoma, aged sixty-two.