

STANTON, MARY E.

INTERVIEW

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

STANTON, MARY E.

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty Investigator

This report made on (date) March 4, 1938 1938

1. Name Mrs. Mary E. Stanton

2. Post Office Address Sulphur, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Route # 3

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 6 Year 1873

5. Place of birth Denton County, Texas

6. Name of Father James Hill Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Sarah White Place of birth Georgia

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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John F. Daugherty,
Investigator,
March 4, 1933.

An Interview with Mar. E. Stanton.
Sulphur, Oklahoma.

I was born in Denton County, Texas, July 6, 1873. I moved with my parents to the Indian Territory in 1839. There were three families and three wagons in our caravan. I was in high school when I left Texas and how I wept when I had to leave my friends and come to such a wild country! The parents of the boy I married came us we did, so I soon became reconciled. We camped at Thackerville the first night in the Territory. We crossed the Red River on a flat boat at Thacker's Ferry. We were all afraid of the Indians and none of us slept much that night.

We finally settled north east of Daugherty in the Chickasaw Nation. Our trading point was Daugherty, and we got our mail there.

About the time we came here "The Indian Citizen" a small paper published at Atoka by Standley and Smezer was circulated and father subscribed for it. It was published monthly and had a circulation of about one thousand copies a month. This was at that time a large circulation.

It published the revised Laws of the Chickasaw Nation in Chickasaw and English. Newspapers were scarce and we always looked forward to the reading of The Citizen.

The Indians were very reluctant to make friends with the white people. Their homes were always built in secluded spots and when a stranger appeared they hid and peered through the cracks in the house like trapped animals .

Mother made our clothes from cloth which she had dyed and woven. She used blackjack to make gray, bois d'arc and copperas for yellow, post oak made dark gray, walnut made brown, and indigo made dark blue. The first dye we purchased from the stores was in lumps. The first dye I can remember was a ball covered with paraffine and wrapped in paper.

Mother first canned fruit in earthenware jars and sealed them with bees wax. Father kept honey in a barrel. We had honey the year around. Father went to the woods and gathered it. Wild bees were numerous.

We had a small brass lamp with a round wick and a handle on one side. A cap hung on one side which fit over the wick. That was the way the flame was extinguished.

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Several years after we came, about 1903, prospectors began to come to our community. There were many black rocks lying around on top of the ground. Day after day men came and prodded around in the earth taking some of the rock with them. At last we found that some of the prospecting was for asphalt. Finally a prospector by the name of Joe Crawford opened a mine, and Murray County's principal industry was brought into existence. The first pit was about ^ehalf mile underground and the asphalt was brought out on a car which was drawn by a horse. The asphalt mill was built at Daugherty near the Santa Fe Railroad, and the asphalt was hauled to the mill where it was prepared for shipment. They made a liquid for roofing purposes and a dry asphalt for paving roads and streets.

I married Ed Stanton in 1891, in a small clay hut built by the Bass Boys, desperados, for the purpose of resting as they passed through here ⁱⁿ earlier days, enroute from Little Rock, Arkansas, to West Texas and New Mexico. Our home to-day occupies the ground where this log hut stood.

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Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

STANTON, W. E. (MRS.)

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Field Worker's name Virgil Coursey

This report made on (date) October 5 1937

1. Name Mrs. W.E. Stanton

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1300 North Lee

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 27 Year 1861

5. Place of birth Missouri

6. Name of Father John D. Phillips Place of birth West Virginia

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Edna Barnes Place of birth Missouri

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 5

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Virgil Coursey,
Interviewer,
October 5, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. W. E. Stanton,
1300 North Lee, Altus, Oklahoma.

In March, 1895, my husband and I, with our six children, moved to Custer County from Grant City, Missouri. We settled on a place we had previously picked out between Elk City and Clinton. The entire country was free range with the exception of a sprinkling of farms here and there. The cattlemen were, of course, desirous of discouraging the "nesters" from settling up the country. There were no churches or schools and one had to ford the rivers. The Washita River was so crooked that it was necessary to cross it several times when traveling east from our place.

Our first home was a dugout. Next spring we built a two room house. We had church at our house until a church house was built. The men donated their work and built a small schoolhouse. This school was called the Ogle School House.

The first spring was so dry that not one furrow was turned until sometime in June. We made a sod crop, planting mostly kaffir, cane and small grains. We made a fair crop.

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When we left Missouri we chartered a car and shipped our things, including a sorghum mill. Mr. Stanton got quite a bit of work making molasses for people in our neighborhood. It was made in the old fashioned way and I believe was the best sorghum I have ever eaten. We had plenty of milk and butter. Mr. Stanton planted potatoes the first year and planted them so deep that they apparently did no good. But we were surprised later to find big potatoes in the hills. Water was hauled to the house from the river and left in barrels in the wagon until needed. One of my sisters visited me and went out with me to the garden to get potatoes. I got my hoe and dug them having big holes fourteen or fifteen inches deep. Then we went back to the kitchen and I got a bucket, climbed up into the wagon and dipped my bucket into a barrel for water. When I returned to the kitchen my sister smiled mischievously and said, "Phoebe, I was just thinking how deep you have to go into the ground for your potatoes, and how high into the air to get water."

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We did suffer many inconveniences but I didn't mind it then. It seemed like a great adventure. One day my brother came by our house and said that he was going across the river to get some plow points or something he had left over there. I was always eager to ^{go} places and do things, so I told him I was going along, too. When we got to the river we were surprised to find that it was rising even though we had had no rain. It was a head rise. There was no bed on the wagon so I had to sit on the running gear and hold to the standards. I had a small baby whom I held between my knees. On the return trip the water was even higher and came up almost to our necks. When we finally got across I had had enough thrills for the day. Speaking of the river reminds me that my brother and husband helped build the first bridge across the Washita River. It stayed there until a flood washed it out two or three years ago.

I remember the first big picnic in that community. Everybody went. Some of the poor fellows had scraped together enough money to buy a bolt of calico and the wife

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and the children were bedecked with identical dresses and bonnets- no mistake of their being the same family. I thought nothing of it then, but it is amusing now. And then after dinner I noticed all the women had little sticks in their mouths, which sticks had been secured from some mysterious source unknown to me. The women referred to the little sticks as their 'tooth brushes.' I had never seen any tooth brushes like them. After some close observation I noticed the women dipped these 'tooth brushes' into little round boxes fished out of their pockets, and I also noticed that when this something was transferred to the mouth that a brown liquid sometimes trickled down into crevices of the face. And then I understood. This is what they called dipping snuff.

Some of the old pioneers of our community were Mr. Grant Armstrong who came there from Missouri and settled before we did. Uncle Jess Phillips and four of his boys who came at the same time we did. Ralph filed near Stafford. Rufus was county judge of Custer County and his son Leon was the late speaker of the House. I don't know

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where Leander is at present, but Louis still lives on his claim. My brother, O.C. Phillips, is a master farmer of Washita County.

On the second Sunday in August what is known as the "Missouri Picnic" is held at Clinton. This is a get-together for all the old settlers from Missouri, and we always have a wonderful time. However, it is sad that a number of us women are widows now. In 1905 we sold our farm and returned to Missouri for some three years. In 1908 there was quite a boom in real estate in Altus and we moved here. Mr. Stanton was a good carpenter and had a good business for a number of years. He died in 1930. I feel that I am one of the most fortunate mothers in all the world. I have reared all my children, nine of them, to be grown. I have been blessed with sweet daughters-in-law and sons-in-law. I spent my entire time in rearing my children, and put my whole soul into their training and I feel amply rewarded.