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INDEX CARD
Oil--Chelsea

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

Field Worker's name Mary J. Stockton.

This report made on (date) 5-28-37 1937

1. Name Esther (Ward) Roberson. Died May 23, 1937.

2. Post Office Address Bushyhead, Oklahoma:

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 9 Year 1862

5. Place of birth Delaware County, Okla.

6. Name of Father Bryant Ward Place of birth Same

Other information about father Pioneer Settler, Rogers, County

7. Name of Mother Kate Taylor Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about mother None available, orphan

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 _____

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ESTHER ROBERSON.

BY

MARY J. STOCKTON

A REAL PIONEER

Mrs. Esther Roberson (widow of Jack Roberson) who died at the family home near Bushyhead, in Rogers County, was a real pioneer--having spent her entire 75 years in the Cherokee Nation, now Oklahoma, and 65 years in what is now Rogers County.

PARENTAGE:

Her father, Bryant Ward, was native son of what is now Delaware County, Oklahoma, born on Flint creek, a few miles from the present city of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, a few months after the arrival of his parents over the "Trail of Tears" from their old home in Georgia. Her mother's maiden name was Kate Taylor. She was an orphan girl and but little is known of her antecedents. Both parents died near the present town of Foyil, Rogers County, Oklahoma, before the town was established.

Mrs. Roberson was born in the Delaware District on Flint creek and within a stone's throw of the Arkansas line, on April 9, 1862, and lived there until she was ten years old, at which time she moved with her parents on a farm located about half way between the present towns of Foyil and Bushyhead, in Rogers County. This farm was allotted in 1903 to

to her sister, Nancy Frances, and is still known as the "Sam Frances farm."

On January 20, 1884, she was married under the laws of the Cherokee Nation, to Jack Roberson, of German descent, and they soon located on the farm less than 2 miles away, where she lived until the time of her death. Her husband was an operator of various kinds of machines, especially threshing machines and for drilling wells. Under his supervision, along with that of his brother-in-law, Sam Frances, the first oil well in Rogers County was drilled five miles west of Chelsea, in 1895. Edward J. Byrd (now deceased) was the principal promoter of the adventure.

Mr. Roberson died on October 1, 1906, as result of an accident which occurred while moving a traction engine. She and her children continued to reside on the old homestead. One of the daughters, Mary, now Mrs. Charley, of Tulsa, was formerly a teacher in the public schools of Rogers County. The sons followed in the footsteps of their father, operating farm and field machinery of various types and one of them, J. Clint Roberson, served one term as County Commissioner from his district.

When Mrs. Roberson first came to what is now Rogers County the broad prairies were covered with tall grass,

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grazed upon by long-horn cattle and deer while smaller game, such as wild turkey and prairie chickens roamed the fields in vast flocks or herds. Country roads were few and far between while railroads were unknown; she had lived on the "old home place" for ten years and was a "full-grown young lady" when the Frisco railroad was built; it ran but two hundred yards from their log house which is still standing, though its identity is lost in a commodious home, and she watched the construction with interest and saw the first train run by her home. This was in 1882.

She is survived by five children: Three sons; Clint and Dewitt, residents of the home community, and Jack of Chelsea; two daughters, Mr. Mary Charley of Tulsa, and Mrs. Clara Dashner of Chelsea. She was buried in Cowala cemetery, beside ancestors and friends, funeral services being conducted in the brick school house built on what was formerly a part of her home and farm.