

ROBERTS, BELLE

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Mildrea B. McFarlandThis report made on (date) 7-12 19371. Name Mrs. Belle Roberts2. Post Office Address Edmond, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 23 E. 2nd.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 19 Year 18675. Place of birth Monticello, Illinois6. Name of Father John Lacy Place of birth IllinoisOther information about father Born 18497. Name of Mother Armina Lacy Place of birth OhioOther information about mother Born 1851

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 _____.

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Interview with Mrs. Belle Roberts
Edmond, Oklahoma

In the year 1890, my husband and I drove to Oklahoma in a covered wagon from southern Iowa. We lived with my brother-in-law on John's Creek, seven and one half miles southeast of El Reno. We were there about a year before we bought our own farm about six and one half miles from El Reno. Mr. Roberts made the run on the Cherokee strip on horseback, but did not get anything as the place was so crowded.

There was a tribe of Indians close to us at Fort Reno. They were very friendly with us, but not so friendly with our neighbors. One night, a neighbor came running to us, shouting "Run to the big school house, for the Indians have broken out!" My husband would not go, for he said we had nothing to fear from the Indians. Because he was not afraid, I wasn't either. However he gathered a lot of stones and piled them inside the door and loaded our two guns. We then went to bed, but the Indians never molested us.

One evening late, about twelve Indian men and women came to our door and asked permission to sleep in our yard. They were on their way to visit another tribe. They were all paint-

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ed up and had on bright blankets, moccasins and had their hair in long braids.

Some were on horseback and others were driving spring wagons. Of course, we told them to go ahead and make their camp anywhere they pleased. During the night a terrible storm came up and they all came crowding to the door. We let them sleep on the floor. We only had one big room. Mr. Roberts was afraid to go to bed, so he sat up by the fire all the rest of the night with his gun close by.

The next morning I prepared breakfast for them.

It seemed to please them very much. When they were ready to go the leader handed me a large piece of cloth to make my baby a dress. It was gaudy and loud. It was bright green with black stripes. I took it, of course so as not to offend these Indians, but I never made it up.

Our main foods in those days were bacon, cornbread and sorghum molasses.

We didn't have a cow and no one else did, close to us. We were always used to lots of butter and milk back in Iowa. My mother would send me six or seven pounds of butter through the mail every month. Of course, she

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always sent it in the winter, so it wouldn't melt. We surely were glad to get it.

We got our drinking water from a spring close by. When we first came to Oklahoma, we brought a bedstead and a feather bed with us.

When we bought our farm we built a dug-out to live in. We brought a little iron stove and Mr. Roberts made a table and two chairs and a dish cupboard. That was the only furniture we had for several years. We were both young and happy and never thought of the hardships we had to endure. I helped my husband plow and plant our crops. We had fine children and we felt that they needed to be where there were good schools, so we moved to Edmond and bought the ground where Wantland Hall now stands.

The State Normal building was the only one on the campus then.

When the college was enlarged, we sold out to the state to erect another building.

We have seen Edmond grow, and develop into a nice little town.