

RITCHEY, W. H. (Mrs.)

INTERVIEW

#7430

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INTERVIEW
RITCHEY, MRS. W.H. BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

7430

Field Worker's name Lula Austin

This report made on (date) August 19 1937

1. Name Mrs. W.H. Ritchey

2. Post Office Address Durant, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1201 W. Main St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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

THE FORNIGHTLY CLUB OF DURANT,
By Mrs. W.H. Ritchey,
Vice President.

In the summer of 1902, Mrs. I. C. Parker, wife of the noted Judge Parker of Fort Smith, now deceased, called together a small group of women in Durant and organized the fortnightly Club. The meeting was held in the Woodman Hall, now the Delwick Clinic.

Mrs. Parker was made the first President of the Club. A committee was appointed to write the constitution and by-laws, the first two articles to be:

Article I--Name

Fortnightly Club.

Article II--Object

The object of this Club shall be to promote higher intellectual, social and moral conditions and to found a library for the city of Durant.

The second or third year a circulating library of twenty-five new and up-to-date books were purchased. Each member paid a \$2.00 fee, which entitled her to the

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selection of her favorite book and the privilege of reading the twenty-five books.

Within a few years several hundred books had accumulated by this method and by donations. A corner was secured in some business place in town for the Library to be placed, and this Library was kept open to the public on Tuesdays and Fridays of each week. Club members checked the books in and out on these days. This was the beginning of the first Public Library in Durant. Mrs. G.B. Hall is the only charter member who has been in the Club since its organization, thirty-six years ago. Mrs. C. O. Johnson, Mrs. B. Stone, and Mrs. W.E. Ritchey have been members more than thirty years.

The Club made many attempts to get a Carnegie Library. Through the help of a Baptist Minister, Mr. Alexandria, who had helped a small town get a Library before coming to Durant, we could have had the Carnegie Library by voting a small tax to finance it. The City Council thought it unwise at that time to add more taxes to their present

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rate. We almost gave up the fight, when much to our great pleasure, Judge Robert L. Williams, who has brought honor to Durant in many ways, bought a lot at the cost of \$6,000 and donated it to the citizenship of his home town, December 31, 1925.

The Fortnightly Club is strictly a literary club. The first year they studied U. S. History. The next nine years they studied Shakespeare altogether. For three years they studied the Bay View Course, then the Mentor. Then for several years they studied the master artists and their paintings, with music on most programs. Later, we had English literature, American literature; one year/course in psychology under Dr. Fixley, Lecture Courses- mixed programs of anything up'lifting.

In 1937 -38, we are to study the lives of great women.

We now have a membership of twenty-nine. Mrs. R.L. McPheron is the present president.