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Field Worker: Merrill A. Nelson
April 7, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs. D. W. Bickel (White)
Maiden name Emma Du Bois
115 West Market
Enid, Oklahoma

BORN September 3, 1860
(77 years old)
Wabash Indiana

PARENTS Father, William Du Bois, Cincinnati,
Ohio. French Ancestry.
Mother, Eliza Davis, Union County
Ohio. Very religious. Had twelve
children. I was the seventh child.
There are three children living.

My husband and I with three children came in a schooner wagon to Hennessey from Washington County, Kansas. We left there the first of October 1890, and arrived in Hennessey the 15th. of October. It was Thursday when we left. I did not care to start on Friday. We had never travelled in a schooner wagon before. We had three horses and two colts. We hoped to secure a homestead but did not know how this was to be accomplished. And we had many experiences before arriving at the Bashes, my cousin's home at Hennessey.

When we reached Clay Center, Kansas, there was rain, rain, and more rain. We had a wagon with a good cover and the three children played in the back while husband and I were in the front part of the wagon. Two horses were hitched to the wagon, the other horse and two colts were hitched to the back of the wagon. My husband said: "I am going to pull in and wait for this rain to stop". Just then looking across to the west we saw a farm house and from it a man came toward the road. But not directly to us. We only had an ax and a butcher knife, but every one advised us to carry guns.

When he came up to where, the man was standing, my husband said: "I am trying to find a place to stay out of the rain." "How many of you are there?", the stranger asked. We were a little frightened by this time. "My wife and three children", said my husband, "for I had gone back in the wagon. "Then come right up to our house". You see, my wife had to take to the open road for her health", explained the man "So we promised our selves that we would take any family travelling in a wagon into our home." This greatly eased our minds and we stayed with this fine family, three days. We had no further trouble till we got almost to Wichita. One of our horses took sick and rolled and groaned. We had nothing but a bottle of whiskey. We camped in a timothy hay field. Day off to the west, you could see another farmhouse. My husband took the lantern and went for relief. But on the way back he got lost from the wagon. I got more and more nervous he was gone so long. The children were asleep. Finally I heard a voice. "Oh, Em, where are you". "Light some straw, so that I can see the wagon". He was not far away but of course could not find the wagon in the dark, I made a light. He did not succeed in getting any thing that would relieve the horse. So we gave it the whiskey. In the morning it was better. We stopped at a veterinarian in Wichita for a bottle of medicine, but we never used it and threw it away later.

When in Marion County, Kansas, a very hilly country, we ran into a strange religious cult of Germans. They had their houses attached to their barns.

We got off the road and we ran out of bread. We stopped at various places, and no one would sell us bread. There were very few towns thru this section. The children got hungry and began to cry.

We went to one farm house. The trees were loaded with fruit. At first they would not give us any thing, finally they said, "Well if you have three children you may have three slices of bread". That was all the lady would let us have.

We stopped. I made some biscuits out of water and flour. I baked them in a skillet. They tasted fine.

We were told that the Arkansas river bridge was not safe. Soon we came to it the muddiest old river and it was a boom. My husband took the colts and got across. And then we drove the wagon across. The river was high and pounding against the piers.

When we came to the Salt For^y it was up too. There was a cow puncher that had crossed seven and eight times and he said for us to follow him. He only had two little mules to a long spring wagon so we followed him down to the river. "Wait till I get across", he said "Then follow in my tracks as nearly as you can". When we got into the river at one place, one of the horses began to go down. My husband used the black snake on him and he gave a big lunge and pulled the wagon along. However we were so near to danger that our wagon bed was filled with water. We had loaded fruit in the bottom of the wagon and put our beds over this, so the fruit of course got wet.

We lived there till September 16, 1893, the day of the run. My husband had bought a Cheyenne pony for the run and a saddle, each cost \$25.00 He had been out practising for the run and one day he said: "I am not going to take a step toward making the run, if I can not have a horse with speed like these other men." "You are going to try, even if you don't have the best horse", I declared. "We have registered, and we have made too many efforts to turn back now".

We camped at Buffalo Springs between Knid and Hennessey. There

were seven wagons and four tents. We spent the evening listening to a vilin possessed by one of the campers.

The morning of the run, I sent my husband off with his lunch and canteen. First we hitched up our two colts and he took Mrs. Annie Truitt and my self to the line. We were going to board a train. He let us out and stationed himself one and one-half miles east of Hennessey as the railroad angled that way, and he wanted to make straight shot to the tracks.

When the start was made. Those blue grass racers left him behind like a streak. But his horse started off and never stopped until within two miles of Enid. He got over the hill about this for from Enid and saw the land office and stopped. The racing horses were behind.

My husband's nephew Billie Beavers, who was riding with him stopped too, and went to the west looking for a claim. He secured one just across the road from us. His horse had made the distance in 47 minutes from Hennessey. You see as it turned out he was a western horse who was used to going up and down hill. The racing horses were used to short level stretches. So we got a claim.

When the first train came along, every available inch of space even to the cowcatcher or the engine was covered with men. We let that train and the second go by. People jumped on almost before it stopped. We did not care to risk our necks. In our party were Mrs. Annie Truett, the two daughters of Dr. Savage, of Sheridan, a railroad man, wife and sister-in-law and five or six others. We rode down to Enid. People were jumping off. One man broke his leg; Mr. Myberg, who later had a store. Others were

were getting up suffering, holding their backs with their hands. The railroad had a high wire fence along the right of way. People were getting hung up on the fence. "I am not going to get off here and try to get through those wires", I said. "If you want to jump, go ahead." We all stayed on the train which soon pulled in to north Enid. There we went out and staked lots. All in one section. We had some one dig us a well. There is fine water in North Enid, had some one string a wire fence around our lots and we were ready to go back. Dr. Savage found out his girls were in north Enid. So he came. We threw covers on the wagon tongues and some of us slept on the ground. This was on Monday. About this time Mr. Bickel found Mr. Trustt who had a lot where Corey drug store is now.

Every one was as black as a "nigger". The dust was blowing. "Well, I got a claim two miles south of town", he said. He had in the meantime got the horses and top buggy and was looking for me. "It is awful rough and looks bad. "No hurry to file". We had a nice little home in Hennessy and if it had not been that other people were moving in on some of the claims we would have let our claim lie idle a while".

But fearing they might get on our claim, we rented our Hennessy place for thirty dollars a month and moved out on our claim. First we lived in a tent. Then in an 8 x 10 shack, with door and windows. Later we built us a barn which we used as a house for while, with bed room upstairs in the left. Cook stove, table, and buggy on the ground floor.

We had a carpenter later build a five room house for \$350.00. He had to haul the lumber from North Enid, due to railroad conditions.

The work was done by Mr. Steele, contractor; he is still living in Iowa. As soon as we decided to make the claim our home, Mr. Beickel set out to get a school. He called school meetings and finally got a district which included some of the railroad right of way, so they would help us with their taxes.

We built a school house later. We thought we were finishing our own house on Thanksgiving day. So I told the carpenters if they would move the stove out of the barn I would cook them a fine meal. We had a rooster which I killed and they were tickled to move the stove. But we had no almanac so we ate out meal a week before Thanksgiving. We bought a cow when we first moved to Hennessey but some one threw a lot of salt rising bread out into the pasture and killed the cow.

We decided to buy several more cows. When we got the Bash'es in Hennessey they asked if we had received a message. "We had not even heard of it." we said. "It was from a brother in Wabash Indiana. My husband went at once as he was very low. But he reached him only in time to attend the funeral."

Our little shack had four stones placed on the floor. Upon these we placed a bed spring. We put our two hole stove on a box, using the box also for a cupboard, and had a couple of old chairs. This was our furniture. Our was about the only house in the neighborhood that was plastered.

Soon the school house was finished and we had three months of school. Lots of people did not realize the value of their claims and let them go. We hardly realized the value either. But when we finally disposed of the place it brought \$16,000.00.

One time I went to a political meeting. Garry Nation and

other speakers were there. The meeting was in Enid between the court house and the post office. Planks were laid on beer kegs. It poured down rain. People stood and listened to the talks and let it rain on them.

My husband, would find work for a dollar and a half a day. I had to do as many of the pioneer women, spend much time alone on the farm.

Our first school teacher was Mrs. Berry Theis. It was just a small school but plastered.

Beards were used for seats. The government allowed some thing for equipment but the text books were some, we older ones had discarded as McGaffey's reader.

School was a mile west of us. We had lyceums in it and other entertainments.

Those were sunbeant days. We wore calico clothes to parties. People were poor. Lots of days a string of people would come to our house and say: "We have nothing to eat but we know you have some thing, so we have come over to your house."

They shipped earloads of flour into aid the people but we had a little so would not swear we were destitute. Some received as high as twelve sacks of flour. Corn, bacon and other products were distributed.

We got along fairly well. The first year our crops were burnt up. We broke up and planted in the draws and you could not believe the fine crops we raised, both in the garden and in the field.

The next March we had another baby. Altogether we had six, a girl and a boy, a girl and boy, and girl and boy. All three of my daughters were trained nurses. The eldest, one of the three that came in the wagon, was in school at Norman. She had typhoid, and her life was spared. There was only one trained nurse in Enid then. We sent our daughter to Wichita to be

trained as a nurse. The boys took business courses here in Enid. That was before Professor George came as president but it was the same business school, Enid Business Collège.

In 1906, Mr. Bickel was appointed rural mail carrier. He started with a buggy and with the horses that were colts when we came here. Ory Williams, Fred Couch and two others besides Mr. Bickel were appointed from Enid. So we decided to move to Enid to save the extra miles for Father and daughter also, who had to be in Enid to secure work as a nurse.

There was this present place for sale, where we live now, a house in the middle of five lots on Market. Mr. Bickel said he wanted room to spit. We moved in May 1, 1904. By this time we had a nice eight room house out on our place. We moved into town and Mr. McGannigan a young married man moved out. McGannigan wanted to raise chicken. He had several incubators and brooders. It was one of the best houses around there.

One day some one called Mr. Bickel over the phone. "Your house is on fire" he shouted. Mr. Bickel ran out but could see nothing. "Some one trying to pull a joke" he said. As it was St. Patrick day. Then another phone call came. "Mr. Bickel the house on your claim is on fire." This was March 17, 1905, my sons rushed out there but every thing was gone. The insurance company gave us enough to rebuild.

My eldest boy Royal Bickel worked in Wells Fargo Express for twenty five years. His work took him all over the southern states. After leaving this work he became a carpenter.

Glen, another boy, was in the World War. He is day yard clerk at the Rock Island now.

My second girl was a Red Cross nurse in the world war.

She was the first nurse to go from the Methodist Church here.

Dewey, the other son, is teacher of History at Long-fellow Junior High School, the ninth year. He is a life member of the Oklahoma Historical Society.