

Notice of Copyright

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

Citing Resources from the Western History Collections

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

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

Field Worker's name Ida A. Merwin

This report made on (date) October 28, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Ida Bell (Prince) Ashby

2. Post Office Address Perry, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 212 South 4th Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 19 Year 1859

5. Place of birth Parkersburg, West Virginia

6. Name of Father William Prince Place of birth Wood County, West Virginia (1833)

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Clamenza (Johnson) Prince Place of birth Green County, Pennsylvania (1836)

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 6.

Interview with Ida Bell Ashby
Perry, Oklahoma

Investigator - Ida A. Merwin
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
October 27, 1937

Ida Bell Ashby, daughter of William and Clamenza (Johnson) Prince, was born at Parkersburg, West Virginia, August 19, 1859.

My father came to Old Oklahoma from Nebraska, shortly after the opening of that country, in 1889.

He secured land about three miles south of the town of Marshall; at this time there was only one store there. During the Winter of 1889-90, Father returned to Nebraska and moved the family, which consisted of myself and two children, I being a widow, and two brothers. My mother died in 1888 and I was keeping house for Father.

The trip from Nebraska was made in covered wagons, bringing cows, chickens and necessary furniture. The trip was extremely hard on cows and one gave out on the way; we only got here with two and the climate was so different from Nebraska that they did not do well.

During the Summer of 1889, Father had built a 12'x 14' rock house. After we arrived my brother and I

cut sod and added another room.

The water we used was hauled from the store at Marshall, a distance of three miles, until we could dig a well.

We used wood for fuel, sometimes going some distance to get it.

Most all of our supplies were purchased at Mulhall, which was fourteen miles from where we lived, and for some time we had to go there for mail. Later, Mr. Rice who operated the store at Marshall was named as postmaster and the mail was brought here by a stage coach from Mulhall.

On one occasion when Father and a neighbor had gone to Mulhall for lumber and the roads and trails crossed the country, the landowner cut and felled trees across the trail while they were in Mulhall and upon their return they found the road blockaded and had to take the team and move the trees before they could proceed.

In 1892, I was married to Z. T. Ashby, who made the run in the opening of the Cherokee Strip, in 1893.

3

He made the start from the South line, near Stillwater; he was on horseback and staked a claim in Section 4, Township 21, 3 East.

In about two weeks we moved from the home south of Marshall to this land, making the trip in wagons and in crossing the country in the blackjack timber southeast of Perry we missed the right trail and got lost; it took us five days to make the trip. The roads and trails were very rough and as there were no bridges it was very difficult to travel.

We lived in a tent around which we built a sod wall and about two years later we built a two room frame house with native lumber secured at a sawmill.

The first crops were kaffir corn, castor beans and melons.

Mr. Ashby would go to Kansas and Missouri where he would work and the children and I stayed on the claim to hold it.

When Mr. Ashby returned he would bring provisions.

Some things were bought at Autry, which later was named Morrison, but there was only one store and they never carried a very big supply.

4

We had a good spring on the land from which we used water until a well was dug. There was some timber from which we got our fuel.

Indians often came to our place as we were near the Otoe Reservation. One time they asked to see Mr. Ashby's gun. I did not know what to do but they came in anyway and took the gun down from where it was hanging on the rafters and after looking at it they replaced it and went on their way.

Ben Cravens often stopped at our place and would take possession, helping himself to food.

Some times he would leave his horse there; it would be so exhausted that it could not go very good and he would go on, leaving it. I think he left three or four horses at our place.

There was a lot of mean things done in those days, the laws had not been enforced, in fact there did not seem to be any laws and people took advantage of such conditions.

At times when the Indians went to their camp meetings, people would go to their homes and take things

5

that had been given them by the Government.

We lived on this land about four years when we sold and moved to Perry, where I now reside.