

McNEAL, SARAH E.

INTERVIEW

#8647

291

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

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates.

This report made on (date) September 24, 1937. 1937

1. Name Mrs. Sarah E. McNeal.

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) South Washita

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 23 Year 1867.

5. Place of birth Blackford, Indiana.

6. Name of Father Thomas Hunt Place of birth Ohio.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Susan Hunt. Place of birth Indiana.

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 4.

Ethel Mae Yates,
Interviewer.
Sept. 24, 1937.

An Interview With Sarah E. McNeal,
South Washita, Elk City, Oklahoma.

I came from Missouri to the Indian Territory in the year of 1893. We came on the train, and brought our cows, horses, and household goods with us.

We came to Oklahoma County, eleven miles west of Oklahoma City. The City was mostly tents. We rented a farm with a one room house that had a shed room for a kitchen with a fireplace in it. The place was already improved. We raised good crops and there was a good orchard on the place. We had lots of fruit of all kinds. There was no church nor school for the first three years. But we had good churches and schools after that.

We lived there five years, then came to Roger Mills, County, and filed on a claim. We came in covered wagons and drove our cattle through. We forded the South Canadian River. We brought twelve hens and a rooster with us.

We were three days making the trip. We came thirteen miles northeast of Elk City, and eleven miles southeast of Hammon. Hammon was two miles north of where it now is.

McNEAL, SARAH E.

INTERVIEW.

8647.

-2-

Our post office was Carpenter. There was post-office and a switch board run by a man by the name of J. A. Hart. This was where our claim was located.

We dug a dugout eighteen by twenty feet, walled it up with rock and covered it with sod. It was almost level with the ground. For shelter for our cattle and chickens we dug back in a bank and covered over head with grass. We lived on a creek bank and used water from a spring.

The first year we put in a sod crop, planting Kaffir and corn. We had no way of planting except by hand. The weather was dry and ^{we}made scarcely anything.

There was an Indian school over near Hammon and my husband got a job building Indian cabins around the school building for the Indians to live in. One day while he was putting a roof on one of the huts, the Indians began to gather around and were talking in their own language. They built a pit out of rock about four feet high, then put logs on it and set them afire. My husband was watching them. He was scared until the cold chills were running down his back, wondering what

-3-

they were up to. When the logs had burned into coals and the rack was hot, they stretched a cloth around it and then brought an Indian out that didn't have any clothes on, just a cloth, about his loins. They took him there and kept him in there until he was almost roasted. My husband asked them what they did him that way for and they said they were giving him a sweat bath for punishment.

The Indians had lots of dogs and he fed his table scraps to them. One of the dogs got sick and one morning when he got up the dog was lying by his shack dead. The Indians accused him of poisoning it. They would gather around and talk in their own language and of course he could not understand what they were upto. He finally made them understand that he didn't poison the dog.

Our children went to school at the Cranley school house. We also had Sunday School there. A preacher would come along once every month or two and preach for us.

We got together and bought an organ.

We drove around the Indian school one time just as the Indian children were marching out. The girls wore

McNEAL, SARAH E.

INTERVIEW.

8647.

-4-

blue dresses with white collars, cuffs and belts. The boys wore blue and white striped overalls. They looked so pretty, but just as soon as they got out of school they went back to their blankets.

There was some game and lots of fish. The children would go up on the Washita River and gather wild plums.

People have gone through some hard trials trying to hold their little homes and settle the country.

We came to Roger Mills in 1900 and have been in the west ever since.

My husband died six years ago in June and is buried in the Fair Town Cemetery here in Elk City. Mother came to the Territory and made her home with us. When she died we took her back to Missouri and buried her by father.