

McLAURY, C. B.

INTERVIEW

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

McLAURY, C. B.

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Field Worker's name Robert W. Small,

This report made on (date) March 30, 1938

1. Name C. B. McLaury,

2. Post Office Address Blackwell, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 324 East Bridge Avenue.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 8 Year 1847

5. Place of birth Illinois.

6. Name of Father J. F. McLaury, Place of birth Pennsylvania.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Margaret Humphrey McLaury, Place of birth Pennsylvania.

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 10.

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Robert W. Small,
Investigator,
March 30, 1938.

Interview with C. B. McLaury,
324 East Bridge Avenue,
Blackwell, Oklahoma.

I was born in Illinois, February 8, 1847, In 1864, my people moved to Missouri where I lived until 1893, at which time I came to Oklahoma Territory.

The first time I saw any part of what is now Oklahoma was in 1890, when three other men and I traveled from Missouri to the country around Guthrie, but were not impressed with the country at that time so returned home.

In 1893 I came out to make the Run for land in the Cherokee Strip and brought my family along. I made the Run horseback from one mile west of the Chilocco Reservation and staked a claim four miles east of Blackwell.

When I left my family to enter the Race I told my wife to bring the wagon and team and everything we had and to drive in a southeasterly course until she struck

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the north bank of the Chikaskia River, then to drive down the river to a point not far from the present site of Blackwell and if I didn't find her before night for her to camp near there that night.

In the evening after I had staked my claim I set out to find my family and rode northwest some distance without finding them so started back down the river on the north and east side. I happened on to another man who was riding that way and we got into a conversation and as we rode along in the darkness of night I heard some one call me and I recognized it was my wife's voice and she had recognized my voice in talking to the stranger who was with me. I went the short distance to where my family was camped and we stayed there that night then early next morning we moved on the claim. I had a tent that we put up to live in and we had feed for ourselves and feed for our stock so I set to work and built a plank house sixteen feet square, with shingle roof and a dirt floor. I went to the Osage Indian country and got a load of poles and brush and went to Kansas

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and got a load of straw and made a shed and windbreak for my stock out of those poles, brush and straw.

I then went to Perry to file; there were lots of men there for that same purpose and we took our turn by number. My number was 444 and I had to stay in line overnight so my wife, who had gone with me, cooked my meals and brought them to me while I stayed right in the line till I could file. While I was in Perry I ran across a young man I had known in Missouri, who was drilling wells in and around Perry for water. I told him that I was in need of a well and would like for him to come to my claim and drill a well for me. He did so and the same young man later secured a quarter section adjoining mine and became not only my neighbor, but also my son-in-law.

We started life on the claim with seven head of horses, one cow, two pigs, about forty chickens, five turkeys, six guineas and six ducks. I built a sod chicken house and when I had the walls up about four feet high I placed some poles across the space between

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the walls, allowing the ends of the poles to rest on the walls to make a temporary roosting place for my chickens, turkeys and guineas, which we had never let out of their coops until I placed the poles up for them to roost on. That evening we let them all out of their coops and they went to roost on the poles, as there was no better place to go. That night I heard the turkeys causing quite a commotion and I rushed out and found that a wolf had my big gobbler caught, but I ran the animal off and saved the turkey. He was badly crippled and torn up but he lived for a year or two. I finished my chicken house of sod walls and put a plank roof on it and used it for several years.

I had a boy who was grown and one about grown. The older boy and a young man who came from Missouri out to this country with me and who had been living with me, went up in Kansas to work to help me make a living and stay on the claim. The younger boy and I broke sod and put out a crop of kaffir, corn and garden stuff, but the crops made but very little.

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That Fall we had seventy-five acres to plant in wheat but we had no seed wheat and no money to buy it. As most everyone in the country was in the same condition, we held meetings in our neighborhood and other communities did the same thing. Delegates were selected from each community to meet at Newkirk to receive proposals from any source that might offer some relief to us in helping get seed wheat for the country. A man from Kansas, representing the Arkansas City Mill and Elevator Company offered to furnish us wheat for seed if we would repay a bushel and a half that next Fall for every bushel we borrowed to sow that Fall. Some of the delegates to this meeting objected to the plan offered by the Kansas man, but I could see no better way out of a bad situation and as I had been sent as a delegate from my community, I told him that personally I would take seventy-five bushels on his terms; in a few minutes almost all had accepted his offer.

The next day I went to Arkansas City and got my seventy-five bushels of seed wheat and went home and sowed

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my wheat land. The following Fall a neighbor of mine bought a wheat header and as he came by my place I asked him if he couldn't put right in and head my wheat, which was then ripe and about ten inches high. He agreed and when my wheat was threshed I had fifty-five bushels. My boy and the other young man who had been living with me and who were up in Kansas working at this time sent me \$10.00 each. I took that money and bought enough seed wheat that with the fifty-five bushels I had threshed would sow another crop of wheat. I had to do something to pay the milling company/^{that} had lent me the seed the year before, so I went to the bank and borrowed \$65.00 to pay them, giving the bank a mortgage on my crop and other stuff. When I harvested that wheat crop in 1896 I got two hundred and fifty bushels, but wheat was not worth very much and soon after threshing the sheriff came around after tax money. I had not paid for threshing my wheat and after I paid the bank and my taxes I lacked \$5.00 having enough money to pay for threshing, so I told

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the thresher man that I would haul him a load of coal from Wellington, Kansas, to pay the \$5.00 to which he agreed and I paid the debt in that manner.

About this time a neighbor of mine died and I went to his place and dressed and shaved him and went to town and got a coffin for him and to the cemetery and secured a lot and helped to bury him and did all I could do as a neighbor to help his family in their hour of grief. Soon after my neighbor's burial, his widow asked one of my children if I had seed wheat to sow that Fall and when the child told her that I didn't, she said, "You tell him to come over here and get wheat for seed". I got fifty bushels from her and my boy and the other young man up in Kansas sent me some more money and I got enough wheat to sow one hundred acres in the Fall of 1896. The next year I threshed 2,750 bushels of wheat and sold it for 86 cents per bushel. I paid my debts, bought the family much needed wearing apparel, bought lumber and built two rooms to my house and many

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other things, including five head of cows and twenty calves.

From then on I prospered and made money farming and raising stock. I raised horses, cattle and hogs and at one time had two hundred head of hogs on my farm, but I made more clear money from cattle than any other stock.

In 1897, I sowed one hundred sixty-five acres of wheat on my place and other lands I had rented and I threshed 3,600 bushels of wheat that year; from that time on I always raised plenty.

Soon after the opening an old maid built a house on her claim in our community and in the winter of 1893 we secured her house to hold a short term of subscription school in. The next year we hauled elm logs to a sawmill then located just east of Blackwell on the Chikaskia River and had lumber sawed with which we built a schoolhouse in my district which was named McLaury School at first. In the winter of 1894, and each year thereafter we had school in that schoolhouse.

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The second Sunday after the Strip opened I sent two of my little boys around over the neighborhood and told the people that we could organize a Sunday school at my place. The people came and we used what chairs we had out in the yard and some sat on wagon seats, some on wagon tongues or anything we could muster for the purpose and we organized a Sunday school. The following week a Reverend Mr. Ford of Blackwell, heard about our Sunday school. I sent word to all the neighbors that preaching would also be held the next Sunday. We had a big crowd of people and the Reverend Mr. Ford preached the first sermon in our community from the following text: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all things else shall be added unto you'.

In 1895 we built a church house known as Prairie Chapel; a Reverend Vanwinkle was our first regular pastor.

In 1899 I bought another quarter-section of land and in 1900 still another one hundred sixty acres, all on the Chikaskia River. I paid \$3,500 and \$4,500, respectively,

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for the two places and after one year I sold the cheaper farm for \$500.00 profit and kept the other for ten years and sold it for \$15,000.00. I later bought two quarters of school land which I gave to two of my sons.

I moved from the farm to Blackwell about 1901 to school my children. I engaged in the real estate business and bought and sold much property in Blackwell for several years.