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BRADBURY, REBECCA A. Patch

INTERVIEW

8398

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

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin, El Reno, Oklahoma.

This report made on (date) August 23 1937

1. Name Mrs. Rebecca A. Patch Bradbury.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 607 South Macomb Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 23 Year 1860

5. Place of birth Bedford, Iowa

6. Name of Father Mr. Steven Patch Place of birth June 7, 1809
Possibly Vermont

Other information about father Died June 27, 1885
Patch

7. Name of Mother Mrs. Jane (Cobb) Place of birth

Other information about mother Died February 12, 1883

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 9.

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Mrs. Nora Lorrin,
Interviewer,
August 23, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Rebecca A.
Patch Bradbury,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Rebecca A. (Patch) Bradbury, was born at Bedford, Iowa, March 23, 1860. Her father, Steven Patch, was raised in Vermont. He was born June the 7th, 1809. He died June 27, 1885.

Her mother, Mrs. Jane (Cobb) Patch, was born October 26, 1816, and died February 12, 1883. Mrs. Bradbury left Bedford, Iowa, when she was nineteen years of age at the time of her marriage ~~of her marriage~~ to Mr. Clement Bradbury. They lived on a farm near Hopkins, Missouri, which is just across the line south of Iowa in Nodaway County. They lived on this farm for six years and two daughters "Joyce" and "Georgia" were born to them while living on this place. They left Missouri and went to California, locating in a little town called "Shasta". They moved back to a farm in Iowa. A son was born to them while they lived there. Mrs. Bradbury had a brother living nine

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miles southeast of El Reno, and he kept writing to them and telling them what a wonderful country Oklahoma was , until he got them enthused with the idea of coming down here and taking a claim.

Mr. Bradbury chartered a car to bring their stock and household goods, which consisted of four horses, two young mules, fifty chickens and two cows, besides farming implements, furniture and household goods.

Mrs. Bradbury and the children came by train and Mr. Bradbury came in the chartered car to look after the stock.

They came down for the second opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands in 1892, and Mr. Bradbury and his nephew made the run on a pair of beautiful Norman mares that belonged to Mr. Bradbury.

Mr. Bradbury and his nephew staked their claims across the road from each other, just five miles straight south of the Mills, which are located at the south end of Bickford and Choctaw Avenues and one and one half miles west of the mills.

They started their run from the Rock Island school house, which is five miles south of El Reno. They only ran a mile and a half west.

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They were in the lead and Mr. Bradbury said to his nephew, "What's the use of running so far, let's stake right here." So they stopped and drove their stakes. They plowed a few furrows on their land and then went to Oklahoma City to file. The Bradburys lived on this claim about sixteen years.

They built a box house 14'x16' with the cracks battened, cooked, slept and ate in the one little room, but not for long. They moved into it on Sunday just six weeks after the opening, April 29, 1892.

The next Saturday a storm came up; Mrs. Bradbury was cooking supper, with two pies in the oven. The wind was getting pretty strong and her husband was standing in the door, watching and laughing at the antics of a rooster that the wind had taken a notion to play with; it rolled him over and over. Then suddenly the walls of the box house swayed, caved in, and were lifted up leaving the family huddled about the stove unhurt. Hail began to fall and Mr. Bradbury took the hand of one of the little girls and made a run for the hen house, which was still standing, and the rest followed him. They stayed

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in the hen house until the storm was over. The cyclone scattered their things for half a mile. The featherbed was picked up a mile away. They finally got all of their things back again, picking them up here and there; some of the neighbors finding some of them.

Mrs. Bradbury had her soiled clothes in a box and near it, a gallon of coal oil. The storm contrived to pour all the coal oil into the box of clothes and succeeded. Mrs. Bradbury surely had a bad task of getting the oil out of their clothing. Their things were all badly damaged.

They had two contestants on their claim; they bought one of them off and the other one built a sod house and stayed two or three months, but it was found out that he already had land and could not have held this claim in any case. He got up and left.

The Bradburys had sixteen hundred dollars in a bank in El Reno. This bank was conducted by a man named Sawyer. This bank failed and the Bradburys only got about eight hundred dollars back and that was in town lots and though

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these lots were valued for a good deal they did not get much out of them. The Bradbury family had a hard time getting through that summer.

Mr. Bradbury borrowed fifty dollars to pay a lawyer to get the money back from the bank. This man got the money and ran away with it. He duped as many of those poor, unfortunate people as he could, collecting quite a large sum and then absconded. Mr. Bradbury had to pay back the fifty dollars which he had borrowed. However, they had a good wheat crop and they got a good price for it. They had four or five stacks the first year and the money for this wheat helped them through their difficulties.

They brought a hogshead full of canned fruit with them. when they came down here and that helped also. They had two good cows and so had plenty of milk and butter.

They dug two wells and got water so gippy that neither they nor their stock could drink it and they had to dig a cistern before they could have water fit to drink. The poor drinking water gave them malaria and chills.

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When the Bradbury family built their second house, they lived with some neighbors named Hurst. The Hursts had a one roomed house and the two families lived in it, until the Bradburys got their house built. There were just two beds and each family slept in a bed, five of the Bradburys and four of the other family. A half dozen or so, of the men of the neighborhood used to get together and go over south of the South Canadian River, into the Caddo country, to gather dead wood out of the canons. They would cross at Jakes Crossing. The men had a regular picnic out of it. They would be gone for three days. They had fine wood for fuel, oak, walnut and cedar. The cedar was made into posts and much of the fencing was made of cedar posts. The Bradburys had their farm pretty well improved before they left it. There was a nice four roomed bungalow, one of the biggest barns in the country, in fact, it was the biggest until George Newman built his barn, a wind mill, orchard and vineyard and some very nice hedge fencing. In the earlier years they raised lots of pie melons for preserves and pickles. Pie melons do well on sod. They also raised lots of vegetables and watermelons.

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They bought their supplies from El Reno and the and first year after they came to Oklahoma/for two or three years, there were nineteen saloons in El Reno.

There were lots of dances, but Mr. and Mrs. Bradbury did not allow their girls to go to them. They considered these dances too rough and rowdy. The soldiers attended these dances. A man living near them was killed at his own dance, his name was Thomas. The Bradbury's last child, a daughter (Dorothy) was born on their claim in 1906.

There was quite a lot of wild fruit in the early days. Mrs. Bradbury remembers picking what she calls "Squaw Cherries". They are something like plums, but smaller and tasted more like cherries. They grew in low places on low bushes. That ground was soon in cultivation and they were killed out. There were also plums and service tree berries.

They moved to El Reno about 1907, when Dorothy was a year old. They moved to a property they owned at 538 South Ellison Street, just opposite the Evangelical Church.

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They later bought a farm nine miles north of El Reno . This farm had a nice three room house, a barn, and a hen house. They set nine hens and were preparing to move onto the farm for the summer when a cyclone struck and blew the house and barn all to pieces. Mr. Bradbury never heard of his nine setting hens again. None of the stock other than the hens were injured. This same storm killed three people at Calumet, it happened about 1911.

The Bradbury family then went to the state of Washington and lived out there for four years. Mr. Bradbury died while they were living out there. Mrs. Bradbury and her daughter Dorothy came back to El Reno, and lived again in their home on Ellison Street. They returned to El Reno in 1917, during the World War. Mrs. Bradbury owned a lot near the High School building and when the High School was enlarged they had to sell the lot. They then bought the place where they now live at 607 South Macomb, moving there in June about ten years ago.

Mrs. Bradbury owns a family Bible which is ninety years

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old, having been published by the American Bible Society of New York in 1847. This Bible has been handed down in their family since that time.

Mr. John Cobb, Mrs. Bradbury's uncle, made a large book-case for his own use when a long time ago he was County Treasurer of Bedford County, Iowa.

The Bradbury family brought this book-case to Oklahoma with them and one of the daughters has it now.