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BROOKS, EDITH ROBBINS

INTERVIEW

7866.

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

Field Worker's name Alene D. McDowell

This report made on (date) September 22, 21, 1937

1. Name Mrs. Edith Robbins-Brooks
2. Post Office Address 710 West Fourth, Bartlesville, Okla.
3. Residence address (or location) 710 W. 4th. Bartlesville, Okla.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 3 Year 1881
5. Place of birth Wintersville, Sullivan County, Missouri

6. Name of Father David D. Robbins Place of birth Missouri

Other information about father buried in Zion Chapel Cem. S. of Weatherford, Okla.

7. Name of Mother Mary Jane Howals-Brooks Place of birth Illinois

Other information about mother buried in Zion Chapel Cemetery South of Weatherford, Oklahoma

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 8

Alone D. McDowell.  
Research Field Worker  
Washington County  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
September 21, 1937

#7666

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Interview with  
Mrs. Edith Robbins-Brooks  
710 West Fourth  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Mrs. Edith Robbins-Brooks was born May 8,  
1881, at Wintersville, Sullivan County, Missouri.

Father - David D. Robbins was born in Missouri,  
died at the age of 78 years and is buried in the  
Zion Chapel Cemetery, south of Weatherford, Okla-  
homa.

Mother - Mary Jane, Howels-Rebbins was born in  
Illinois, died at the age of 77 years and is buried  
in the Zion Chapel Cemetery south of Weatherford,  
Oklahoma.

My parents were both of Scotch-Irish descent.  
They were married July 7, 1868, and one week later  
my father enlisted as a soldier in the Union army.  
Henry, my eldest brother, was born the following  
April, while my father was on the Shiloh battle-  
field.

I removed from Missouri to the Indian Territory  
with my parents in November 1894. My father and  
brother, Henry, had come to the Indian Territory  
in August to secure claims. They each secured a

160 acre claim, and after our arrival, my brother, Marion, took up a claim across the road from them. We settled on the claim in Custer County, about 3 miles South of Weatherford. At that time Weatherford was unheard of.

We made the trip from Missouri to Minco, Indian Territory on the train, then drove about 60 miles in the wagon, to our new home. We spent several days in the wagon yard at Minco, where I saw my first Indian. Of course, we were afraid of them, but our curiosity won out and we ventured near enough to see them. We were in the wagon yard over Sunday and attended church services at the Church of Christ in Minco.

I was 13 years old when we came here and can well remember how excited we all were, over our first train ride. There was an old lady about 70 years old, who sat in the seat with me. She had never ridden on the train before and every time the train stopped,

regardless of the size of the station, she would ask the conductor if it was Chicago, Illinois. I was so embarrassed and amused, I changed to another seat. I'll admit I was green but I did know enough to keep still and not expose my ignorance.

My father chartered a car and brought his household goods, implements, cows, hogs, horses, mules and chickens to the Indian Territory. We also brought provisions to last us for a year. We had 700 pounds of flour, in barrels, cured meat and fruit. We were fortunate to have these provisions for the first year we did not raise anything. The cows and hogs <sup>did not</sup> thrive here, for they were not acclimated to this country. Our food was scarce the second year and I remember the only fruit we had was dried apples. Our chief crops were cotton, wheat and kafir-corn.

Our nearest trading post was Mince, a distance of about 60 miles. We bought our supplies at Mince and El Rene, also about 60 miles.

There was a small store at Seger about 15 miles from our home, where we received our mail. This place is no longer in existence. Mr. Auxier was the store keeper.

There was a school for the Cheyenne-Arapaho Indians at Seger, South of Weatherford. This was known as the Seger school and I have visited this school. I attended one of their 4th. of July picnics and witnessed many of their Indian customs. One custom I recall was the way they bathed their babies. The mother would spit water from her mouth on the baby, then rub it on the baby and dry it with a shawl. When the men paid for anything they bought, they spit the money from their mouths.

Our home was a one room dug out, built in the side of a bank, the inside was built up of logs. We had a front built of rough lumber with one large room down stairs and 2 bed rooms up stairs. This was a one and one-half story and was located on the prairie, without a tree in sight. This place was located on the Cheyenne-Arapaho trail and the Indians traveled past our

house in large numbers, about 40 wagons in a string. They would sometimes pass dressed in feathershead gears and they looked hideous, and we children would hide under the bed for we thought they were on the war path.

We had the only water well for miles and all the neighbors hauled drinking water from our place. The water was pumped with a wind mill. My father and brothers hauled water for the stock from Deer Creek, a distance of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles.

When we first settled in the Indian Territory there were no churches or schools. The people of our vicinity were very progressive and soon organized a church and school. These people were all from the state of Missouri and were more advanced than in some of the other communities.

The Church of Christ was organized, with Evan Lowery and Levi Collins as the elders. Services were held in the homes of the members.

I received my early education in a little school organized by the parents of the community. A one room rock school house was built, with a



rod roof and no floors and we used long benches for seats. This was a very crude structure, but we were proud of it. This school was located near the Custer-Washita County line and children from both counties attended. This was known as the Missouri School, District #20. Our first teacher was one of the neighbor men, Henry Auxier. Another teacher at this school was one of the leading men of our community, Henry Lowery. I have a picture of the school at the time Mr. Lowery taught us. I graduated from the eighth grade in this little school house, under Professor Anderson, then attended normal at Weatherford for four months.

My father was a hunter and trapper and sold the hides at El Reno. The winters that he trapped, he killed about 80 coyotes and many skunks. After he skinned the skunks we would sometimes make soap from the cracklings, after the grease was rendered. He usually gave them to the Indians who made chuckaway, which they ate. These Indians also ate dogs.

Deer was plentiful in our vicinity, but my father would not kill them. There were lots of wild cats and wolves, and rattle snakes were numerous.

Weatherford was a tent town, when it first started, but was blown away by a cyclone. It was later rebuilt and when the railroad was built through the town, the surveyors boarded with my parents. We had our wheat ground for flour, at the mill at Weatherford. This town <sup>now</sup> has a population of approximately 8,500.

We had no roads in the early days and traveled by trails. These trails were deep ruts that nothing could travel over except wagons and buggies. A car could never have been driven in those days. There was a ford over the Canadian River at Fort Reno.

Our early day recreation consisted of pie suppers, parties, literaries, church activities and singings. We would gather in the homes where there were organs for our singings. Dances were held on Deer Creek, but we did not attend.

I remember when we first came here, there was a rumor in our vicinity that the Indians were on the war path and the men of the community met and made plans to build a log fort, but the rumor did not materialize and the fort was never built.

Some of our Missouri friends who were settled in Custer and Wabita Counties were: Jess Pigg, Evan Lowery, George Auxier, Jim Pigg, Bill Auxier and Henry Auxier.

I was married to Aubrey E. Brooks at Cordell, Oklahoma, in 1910. We are the parents of four girls and one boy, all born in Oklahoma.