

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Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.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For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.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.

INDEX CARDS

Greer County
Living Conditions
Home-Dugout

Field Worker, Zaidee B. Bland,
July 21, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Minnie Burke,
Altus, Oklahoma.
503 N. Grady St.

Born November 2, 1866,
Missouri.

Father John W. Larrew, Indiana.

Mother Martha Jane McFall, Kentucky.

I came to Oklahoma with my parents just after the decision making Greer County Oklahoma, instead of Texas. We lived in Missouri and father had long wanted to come to Texas for he thought that he and mother would both have better health in a higher, dryer climate. Mother would never give her consent to move to Texas, but when father could sell our farm in Missouri for a real good price and take up free land or buy out some one's claim and prove up, mother consented to come. We loaded our household goods and several head of horses into a box car and shipped to Granite, Oklahoma, and all of us came on the train. In only a few days father was able to buy a man out,

five miles southwest of Granite. This claim had a dugout on it and a good well of water. It was hard water but we were able to use it until a cistern could be built.

Father built a five-room house as soon as the lumber could be hauled. We had brought enough furniture, except stoves, for all the rooms. We had to get new stoves that would burn both wood and coal. There was nothing very unusual about our furniture that we brought from Missouri except that father had the walnut boards sawed from trees on our place in Missouri and made a lot of the furniture himself. One piece, a walnut safe, is still in our family. The whole structure is of walnut. It has two medium sized drawers in the top and two wooden doors with shelves behind them. It sets flat on the floor on wooden legs without rollers. We also had one cord bedstead of walnut. A dresser is still in the family.

Society.

There were churches and schools both at Mangum and Granite. Father and mother were both very religious

and would not let any of us children attend dances or picnics where we would be gone late at night. Father said he attended dances five nights a week when a young man, never letting rain, sleet or snow prevent his attendance and he knew just what they stood for and now he and mother had both joined the church he did not propose that any of us children should be subjected to any such temptations as a dance offered. We were a large family and as we had to attend church several miles away from home and had no way to go except horseback we were great big children before we ever attended worship in public. Father brought a minister home with him to baptize us four older children. I can remember it very well. When we were older, father got a surrey, or hack it was sometimes called, and then more of us could go at one time.

Work.

The four older children were all taught to work in the field. Mother and father's health was not good and we older children early learned to take responsibility.

Father would lay off the rows for corn or cotton and we children would follow with the seed and a hoe and do the planting by hand.

Mother taught us girls to spin and weave but I do not remember that we did either after we came out here except weave carpets. We made our own clothes and bedding. We raised hogs, always put up our meat and lard, and made all the soap we used, except hand soap.

Fruit and garden.

We missed our fruit when we first came here. There were plenty of wild plums on father's place if the city folks did not beat us to gathering them, which they did sometimes. That was about all the fruit we had for several years until an orchard could be planted and had begun to bear. From the first all vegetables grew abundantly for us. Father built a porch the entire length of the south side of the house and put a tin roof over it. We would spread a cloth on this tin and put vegetables on it to dry, taking them in at night; and it would take only a few days for them to dry. We dried corn and blackberries, which not many

people tried; beets, collards, turnips, and potatoes (both sweet and Irish) were hilled up in the ground for winter use.

Father raised a lot of alfalfa and there was always a good sale for the hay. Sometimes he let it seed and I think he got \$800 and \$10.00 a ton for the seed.

I was always very timid and as we were not allowed to go many places we did not get acquainted with many people. We girls had brothers who could go with us everywhere we were allowed to go so our beaux had a hard time getting acquainted with us. When Mr. Burke made up his mind that he wanted me for his wife, he began to hunt for excuses to visit our home. He was a business man in Granite and boarded with my cousin. He would always be sending me some word about wanting to see me but would not come right out and ask for a date. Every time he was out our way he would stop to see father but I would always hide or stay in the kitchen if he stayed for a meal. One day he drove up in a nice buggy and told us that there was to be a fish fry out on

the creek and that my cousin had sent him for me for they wanted me to help cook the fish. I hid in the kitchen as usual. He would not be contented with sending me word but came out into the kitchen to see me and asked me right out to let him take me in his new buggy. I said, "I guess I can't go unless I can get my sister home to stay with mother. She is not well." Mr. Burke said, "Where is your sister? I'll go for her." I had no further excuse so I went and that began our courtship. He would come every Sunday in his buggy and take me for a drive. He said to me one day, "Minnie, I know you want to know about my drinking for I am not a church member as your people are. I take a drink with the boys occasionally but was never drunk in my life and never intend to be. I'll never mistreat you and I can offer you as nice a home as you are used to and believe I can always provide you with enough to eat and wear," and he always did. I do believe he was always the kindest man to every one I ever knew, even to the animals.

Church quilting bees and singing with an occasional fishing party were all the social events in which we

were allowed to participate but we had a good time and were good boys and girls. We are all married and have families with no divorces and squabbling among us and I guess that is saying a lot for the way we were raised.