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~~BURCKHALTER, D. B. (MRS.)~~

INTERVIEW

9724

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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-History Project for Oklahoma

BURCKHALTER, D. B. (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) January 17, 1938

1. Name Mrs. D. B. Burckhalter.

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 11 Year 1872

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father Sanders Austin Place of birth Don't know.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Austin. Place of birth Don't know

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 this form. Number of sheets attached _____.

An Interview with Mrs. D. B. Burckhalter, Elk City.
By - Ethel Mae Yates - Investigator.
January 17, 1938.

My parents were Sanders Austin and Elizabeth Austin.

I was born and raised near Fort Smith, Arkansas, and was married in the year 1896 to Mr. John H. Mahria.

We came to the Chickasaw Nation in 1899. We were both in bad health and came for the change. My husband in the summer "highwayed" it through and I came in the fall by train and we settled near Wynnewood on a farm.

He lived in a two roomed log hut that had the cracks daubed with mud, and started a crop there.

My health was so wretched that I was hardly able to raise a hand, so after the crop was started my husband sold out and we moved over to Maxwell, still in the Chickasaw Nation, and lived in a tent and my husband worked at odd jobs until fall, when the gin started, then he got a job there.

He was waiting to build a house for a man and some way he was accidentally hit on the head with a two by four piece of wood, and died nine days later, leaving me with a little six weeks old baby and no health.

I then went back to the first place we had lived near

Wynnewood, and made my home with a cousin, Mr. Franklin. I gradually gained my health back; my cousin was a prosperous farmer who raised cotton, corn and hogs.

In 1900 we came West and my cousin bought a claim nine miles north of where Elk City is now and settled on a creek and lived in a dugout that was just dug down in the ground. My cousin built one room out in front of our dugout.

In 1901 I was married to Mr. D. B. Burckhalter and we moved thirty miles north of Elk City to a place where he had filed on a claim, and made a little sod house, and I really got some experience. I was afraid as I could be to stay in that sod house. We had to carry water from a spring that was several hundred yards away and it was not down hill either, and we managed just any way for fuel, as there was not much timber on the place.

After the railroad came to Elk City we went there for supplies. Our post office was Texmo, which was twelve miles away and later was done away with. A man named Bill Davis came in there and started a town that is called Leedey.

Our dugout had one door and one window with a shutter,

dirt floor and a dirt fireplace in the back end. One day a snake came in to visit us, and being an unwelcome guest I got after it. It ran into a hole in the fireplace and being unable to get ~~it~~, I poured coal oil on it and set it on fire. I got rid of the snake, but had to go outside to eat for several days.

The rats also came to see us, and one night I was awakened by one that was fixing to get a feast on my forehead, just between my eyes. I had tiny twin babies in the bed with me but they were unharmed.

Our dugout had the gables fixed in with cottonwood lumber and anyone who knows anything about it knows how the rain and sun can make cottonwood warp so my husband went to work and walled the dugout with sod and one night the planks gave way and fell in on the bed that the children were sleeping in and fell so hard that it broke a bed slat. There was quite a commotion but the children were unhurt.

We never went on one fishing trip while here but we went over on the Washita River a number of times hunting wild plums. We lived on the claim seven years, then moved

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to Elk City. I was glad, for living in that sod house was almost unbearable to me.

My husband is dead and is buried at Grandview. I have lived in and around Elk City ever since.