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Field Worker: M. A. Nelson  
Date: March 12, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs J. H. Bash (White)  
1109 E. 15th St., Oklahoma City, Okla.

BORN January 23, 1866  
Grant Co., Indiana.

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My maiden name is Rachel Wimmer Bash. One of my ancestors, Mr. Krum, is listed among those who were granted land by William Penn in 1682 under a grant from Charles II (1681). This Mr. Krum was said to be one of Wm. Penn's close friends. He selected a tract of land near Philadelphia. Another member of our family, John Crum or Krum (name spelled both ways), was a revolutionary soldier.

My mother's father had seven brothers in England. Grandfather died. We did not know the name of one of the uncles. Now we feel, since this uncle was one of the seven brothers, that we lost an estate or part of it, not knowing the name.

I was born in 1866 in Grant Co., Indiana. Mr. Bash and I were married in 1886. Just a week after, we went to Lane County in Western Kansas. We preempted a piece of land six miles from Dietman. We went to Dietman in 1886 and lived there until October 1889.

About the first of November, we came to Oklahoma. I drove a wagon with double side boards. My husband had a wild team, just off the range, which had never before had a set of harness on. I had a balky horse. The man who drove the cattle's horse had feet which became sore, crossing and recrossing the trail to

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When we got to the Cimarron River, there was another family with two wagons, the same number that we had, making four in all. All got across but myself. They shouted to me, " Stop and let the horses drink." I got off my high seat, climbed along the tongue and unreigned the horses. But the horse that was tied loosely to mine got directly in front of the team and this caused the mean one of my team to balk. I tried to make it go on without any results, so my husband waded back to me- the water coming to his armpits- and got them started again.

We had to travel our stock from creek to creek. Some times the creeks were so far apart that this was sometimes a great inconvenience. They told us when we got to a certain place in the Cherokee Strip that we would have to make 25 miles without stopping or between stops for water. We started over this stretch and the cattle began to lie down. We did not like to do it but we had to go right on. One after another the cattle lay down. There were thousands of range cattle on the strip to say nothing of the Indians and others about. We were afraid they would get mixed with the native cattle or that some one might steal them. Mr. Hilbish was driving the cattle.

When the place for which we were heading was at last reached, we made a fire, ate our suppers and climbed up in our wagons where our bedding was and went to sleep. Very early the next morning, my husband went back to look for the cattle. He was overjoyed when he found that Mr. Hilbish had already rounded them up and was driving them in.

The way we camped was quite methodical. The elder man, Mr. Van Deering, in the family which was traveling with us, would gather the wood while his two sons Ben and James, drove a wagon each. The had a door on the back of the wagon which dropped down disclosing a cupboard. A peg swinging from the table would rest on the ground and support this door which then acted as a table.

We would put the back ends of three of the wagons together in a circle. The two women would get the meals upon a horse blanket. I would get down and hold Mr. Bash's horses, which I said were wild, while he got off his wagon.

The last day that we were in Kansas we prepared to cross the strip. There were no settlements in the strip. We stopped at a store and loaded up with provisions. Then we started. It sleeted, snowed, rained- kept on snowing- we kept on going.

Finally we came to an old sheep ranch, in a circular form. It was open only to the south. The old man who was hunting found an old peach tree. I often think backwards of the warm fire that that peach tree made. That was the worst day and the worst weather we had.

You can't imagine how high the grass was in the southern part of the strip. It was as high as the double side boards of our wagon. When we got about four miles east of Hennessey, the cattle lay down again. They would always do this when their feet got sore so we stopped.

We had forgotten to get bread. Occasionally we would 5  
buy some along the way, but usually we made biscuits. When we  
left home, we had bought a lot of bread with us. Besides I had  
made a five gallon jar of cookies. But these would not last long  
among six men.

One of the Van Deering boys who was handy in many ways  
said he would make biscuits. We put our cupboards round about.  
We had a dutch oven-or large kettle with an iron lid under which  
kettle we put hot coals. We would put a cover or cloth over the  
horse blanket. One woman would serve the coffee from one side of  
this and the other woman from the other side.

We had one of those milk-buckets with a strainer on the  
top and usually had milk from our own cows but this time we were  
out. We always served meat and potatoes spread out the tin pan  
plates and the knives and other utensils, after we women had served  
once around, if anyone wanted any more they would help themselves.

The Van Deering boy had gone to a house nearby but no  
one was at home so he returned, and I made the pancakes out of water.  
Just at this time we could see some one moving in the tall grass,  
and whistling. On horseback a man drove up who we found later  
was going to settle on a claim just one quarter or claim away from  
us, near Hildredge.

This man often laughs now and jokes about my water  
pancakes, which I served him in the hospitable way of the pioneers.  
Of course we did not know then that he was to be the Enid postmaster  
and that it was none other than the author of "The Cherokee Strip",  
Mr. George Rainey of Enid, Okla.

Later I became a school teacher in Oklahoma. The following incident occurred during my teaching experience:

I had to drive a mile and a half from the place where I stayed to my school. I would stop on the far side of the creek. Here lived the parents of the young man, McCandles was their name, who loaned us his shack on the other side of the creek for a school. I would picket my horse at the home of his parents and would walk across a log on foot to the school.

None of the McCandles children could walk across the log which served as a bridge. One time I helped two of them across and on returning from the school for the third, I slipped and fell. The child ran back to the house. I took off my shoes and stockings, wrung the bottom of my dress dry and went on to school as though nothing had happened.

The boards of the school were straight up with other straight, or boards laid flat, across the top. There were wide cracks between the boards in the roof. The benches of made of straight planks of shorter lengths with long planks across the tops. The seats were made of still shorter straight boards with long planks across the top of them

One day it began to rain. The water came through the cracks in the roof. It rained and rained and rained. I told the children to stand on benches in such a way that the water passing through the cracks would miss them. The dirt floor became wet and muddy. The little creek became a river. I taught all grades from the 'chart' class to the 8th grade. When it came time to go home

I told the older boys they might go but that I would stay with the other children. The water was then rushing by with a terrible roar. These older boys, really young men, were of an age that they were able to care for themselves.

When I started at last for the creek, the parents of the children were lined up on the other bank. They were almost frantic, thinking their children had been sent home and were drowned. "Go back to the school house", They shouted across the channel.

"It is full of water" I shouted.

The father of one of the boys, Mr. Poston, came.

He lived on the same side of the creek as the school house. He had gone in a round about way and reached the school in his wagon.

We all climbed in his wagon, intending to stay at the home of the first family who had school children in my care. But when we came to that house. Mr. <sup>Post</sup>Poston shouted "Get out". None of the pupils moved. "We won't get out unless our teacher does", they cried. So I jumped out. Then everyone of them got out. When Mr. Poston saw that he said: "Get back in". So I got back in and all the children got in again. As he thought that some of them should stay at his house. So he took all of us, when he saw how the children wished to stay with their teacher to his home. It was not an elaborate affair. It had two rooms, and was made of sod or of log construction.

We had, all of us, a hot supper of bacon, eggs and biscuits. A bucket was given the children in which to wash their feet. A wagon cover was laid on the floor.

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The boys slept on that. The girls and the teacher slept in the other room with Mrs. Poston. The next day the school went along as usual. And by that time the creek had subsided so the children could go to their own homes.

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I was said to be a good driver of horses. At any rate, when in my buckboard my husband who was on horseback, unless I wanted him top, could not pass me. "You see I did not want my husband to beat me," Once a man by the name of McIntire came to one of the primitive constructions that went by the name of bridges- it was merely a few logs laid parallel with the current and saplings thrown across that. McIntire on horseback, started across. He was surprised when I crossed the rickety structure in my buckboard, which was about ready to collapse, the water oozing thru the cracks in the bridge with every step of the horse.

Field Worker: M. A. Nelson  
Date: March 12, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mr. J. H. Bash (White).  
1109 E. 15th St., Oklahoma City, Okla.

B ORN August 12, 1862  
Grant Co., Indiana.

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My ancestors came from Germany and settled in Pennsylvania. My father was Michael Bash, my mother- Phoebe Wiles. I was born in 1862. There were two branches of our family in America. One moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio, and then to Indiana. The other, settled in Virginia.

My wife and I shortly after we were married settled in Lane Co., Kansas. I did not make the run but came to this country shortly afterwards- in June 1889.

In coming, I drove one team, my wife drove Mr. Hilbish's team. And Mr. Hilbish, a friend drove the cattle. The wagon in the Oklahoma Historical Society Building Basement is almost an exact copy of my wagon.

George Rainey had a claim about a mile from us. He was one of the first persons I saw when I filed for a homestead in Kingfisher County. He located about a mile from where I stopped to file. He came back and stopped with us shortly after.

We did not see all things just as Mr. Rainey described them in his book, "The Cherokee Strip". As no two persons sees the same thing the same way.

Dr. Rector of Hennessey who died two or three years ago was another old timer. Also Bill Mallily. The latter had many experiences with rough men in the country at that time. Personally I had few experiences with Indians or bad white men. Mr. Malliley.

One night however a band of 300 Indians camped near our place. They went on to the northeast possibly to visit the Sac and Fox agency. They returned about two weeks later camping at about the same place near our claim. One of Mr. Malliley's experiences was the burying of Pat Hennessey after he was killed and burned. He still lives in Kingfisher.

After a short time, having made hay and done some improving about my place I returned to Kansas. Soon I was back, not long after starting a grocery and dry goods store in Hennessey. Yeager bought groceries of me and another bad man by the name of Freeman stopped at our house once to inquire for Yeager.

I saw the run in 1893, known as the Cherokee Strip Opening. The line was just four miles north of Hennessey. On the morning of the run, my entire grocery stock consisted of axle grease, soap, and lamp flues. I left the store in charge of my wife and went to a vantage point from which I could see everything. There was a crowd of about ten thousand. They were in every conceivable form of conveyance and some were on foot. Others on horseback or in wagons. They swarmed every where. Soon they came to Hennessey. They were quiet and orderly for such a large company.

I was the first assessor in Skeleton, Kingfisher Co., township. Also the first to make an assessor's report in Kingfisher county. At first there was no taxable property. The County clerk asked me to arrange the list assessed in alphabetical order. I did so but as soon as I was through, I said, " See, here, this is your job. " After that the county clerk did the listing. I knew I was right as I had done this kind of work in Kansas.

The government appropriated \$50,000 for schools. My wife taught two terms in the Spring Creek School. One term that she taught they used frame the other a sod building.

Field worker's note:

It was difficult to get the facts but I found out from Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma in his possession that he was formerly mayor of Hennessey, was elected to the city council six time and was prominent in other ways in civic life.

Among the books Mr. Bash has is an old 1545 german BIBLE, and Okla.

Freeman's History of Kansas, 18--and a rating and credit book for Kingfisher County of the old days.