

MARTIN, ETTA

INTERVIEW

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446

447

INTERVIEWER ZAIDEE B. BLAND  
Indian-Pioneer History S-149  
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INTERVIEW WITH ETTA MARTIN  
East Main St., Blair, Okla.  
Born 1875, Missouri.

FATHER'S NAME ISIDOR KAMENZIND  
Born Switzerland  
MOTHER'S NAME MARTHA McMILLIAN  
Born Illinois.

I came with my parents and three brothers to Oklahoma in 1891. We came through from Texas. Father raised registered Holstein cattle and needed more room and grazing land. We started from McKinney, Texas, with two covered wagons, some loose horses and mules and one hundred head of pure blood registered Holstein cattle. Father and my brothers had been as far as Vernon, Texas, several times and although we did not know just where we would file we knew we would file some where north of the river toward the mountains. We were three weeks on the road for we did not want to rush our cattle. It was April of the year and every thing was very beautiful, and there was plenty of grass for the stock to graze. It was very dry and we had some little trouble finding camping places that had water. After we crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing we came to

2

the beautiful mirages this country is noted for now but then we did not know what they were, and were fooled time and again, thinking we were coming to an abundance of water, only to find it the mirage. I think the cattle were fooled too for it had been a long dry march and they were always thirsty it seemed; and about the time some of us would think "Why! there is water;" the stock would quicken their gait as though they saw water also. We were fooled any number of times before we learned what it was. There were only two houses above the ground between the Crossing at Red River and where we filed, one mile west of what is Blair now, but then was no town.

HOME

We brought with us a big tent in which to live until we could get living quarters fixed. All lumber had to be hauled from Vernon fifty miles away. We set up house-keeping in this tent as we brought with us all the furniture we needed for such primitive

## 3

living, and arranged it in the tent. A cook stove, bedsteads, chairs, tables. We really had a nice home for the wilderness. We brought our books and nicer dishes and linens for home use. We had enough provisions to do us a long time. My brothers were all older than I and we really had three men in the family who set to work with a will. Mother and I were shielded from the rough work that many of the pioneer women had to encounter for that reason. Our work was confined entirely to the house. I never knew how to milk, and could not ride a horse unless he was very gentle. We never even drove one of the wagons through. Father drove one and one of the brothers the other, while the other two brothers drove the cattle. Pap and the boys sank a well and built a fence to keep the wild cattle from the thoroughbred cattle before they started on the living quarters for us. We were very comfortable in the big tent. It took three days to go to Vernon and return with a load of lumber. Pap built us one large room fourteen by eighteen feet with a basement under it, for our home. We had our sleeping quarters down in the basement in winter and slept out doors in the summer. Father had all his cattle registered

## 4

but went back to the Dallas fair that fall and bought a blue ribbon male and cow to freshen up his stock. He paid two hundred dollars for his male and three hundred and fifty dollars for the cow with calf. When the calf came it was a male, and pap sold him for eighty dollars when he was six weeks old. He never sold a cow under from seventy five<sup>to</sup> eighty-five dollars. He always had a good sale for his cattle and that also kept us from experiencing some of the hardships the drouth brought to so many of the pioneers. People came from near and far to buy stock cattle from us.

## CHURCH AND SCHOOL

Martha was our nearest church and school, until a church was built at old Dot one mile south of where Blair is now. We were all charter members of the church organized at Dot.

## INDIAN SCARE

We had two or three Indian scares after we came but they did not amount to any thing. An Indian was killed over near the north fork of Red River, and the

4775

5

Kiowas called a War dance and in some way captured a man named T. Whitten, foreman of the Byrd Ranch that joined our land. They made Mr. Whitten dance all night with them until just before day he escaped and got to our house first calling to pap that he wanted to warn all settlers. Of course all the boys came out of the under room to listen too, and Mr. Whitten was so nervous, tired and frightened that he could hardly talk. We never knew just how it happened, but one of his pistols fell and went off, and had not my brothers all been up talking to him there would have been a tragedy for the bullet went right through the floor and into the bed in the dugout. As it was no one was hurt. For several days all the women were kept together at night while the men had their guns ready and kept guard but nothing came of it except the people told all the horrible Indian tales they ever heard and frightened us newcomers to death. I have visited in Quannah Parker's home and later at his table, as also White Cloud's a Cheyenne chief. Quannah Parker had a

6

fifteen room house. Each of his several wives had a separate room but all ate in a common dining room. A white man and his wife were the house keepers and of course they had white ways of serving their food. They told me that the squaws liked plain food best, meat and vegetables mostly, caring little for sweets of any kind. Pies and cakes were never served unless Quanah was at home. I met several of his wives and remember some of the names but do not know how to spell the names except Too Nicy/<sup>who</sup> was his favorite. As Indians go I suppose she would have been considered very handsome. Quanah bought her from a common buck and paid twenty-five Indian ponies and eight hundred dollars in cash, and a two seated surrey for her. He always took Too Nicy everywhere with him and had her dressed like an American woman when he took her to Washington, D. C. with him. Also all the silverware was kept in her room and other nice things that were used only when they had special company. I visited in several of the wives' rooms and always found every thing

7

neat and clean and lots of fancy bead work for that was the way the squaws spent their time, having nothing to do except keep their own rooms. There were not very many children. Too Niccy took me to her room once and showed me a hunting jacket she was beading for Quannah that was very beautiful. No one shared Quannah's room except by special invitation from him. He had only one lady's picture in it and that was his mother's. There was an old Mexican servant named Juan that was too old to go with Quannah any more that was always available to wait on his wives, bring water, and make fires. He had been captured by Quannah's grandfather in a raid in old Mexico and was reported to be one hundred and fifty years old when I saw him and he looked every day of it. He was so withered, dried up and little, but he got around all right although he was weak and slow. He surely loved Quannah and I believe would have accounted it an honor to have died for him.

#### WEDDINGS

The first wedding I attended after we arrived here was held in the old Dot School house. The march was played on the organ and there were the bride's maid and best man just

## 8

as we might have had, had we been back home. The flowers had to be native flowers for we had not been here long enough to have flower gardens. The church was decorated with the large cream colored flowers that grew in such abundance all over these prairies when we first came. It was called century plant or beard grass but I think the real name is yucca. The flower is large and fragrant, a deep cream in color and made beautiful decorations. It was also used as a bouquet for the bride. I believe the bouquet was given to me, at least I remember I was the next to marry and you know the old saying, do you not, about whoever receives the bride's bouquet will be the next bride.

## DRESSES

We wore the dresses of the time. The most of the men wore high heel boots, spurs and had not quit wearing their guns although there was a law against it by 1894, I think.

I remember we were all at Corinth school house once. The benches were long with plank backs. My girl friend

9

and I with two young men went in to sit down and my girl friend's beau caught his holster some way on one of the planks and his pistol fell out on the floor with such a clatter that every one heard it, and it frightened us so. The boy got up and left and my friend dropped her coat over the gun and picked it up quietly and laid it in her lap until after preaching was over and nothing was ever said about it, although we knew every one in the church knew she had it.