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HATES, E. M.

INTERVIEW

9052

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

#9052

BATES, F. M.

INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) October 27, 1937

1. Name F. M. Bates

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma,

3. Residence address (or location) 217 South Randol.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 10 Year 1863

5. Place of birth Stephensville, Erath County, Texas.

6. Name of Father B. F. Bates Place of birth Illinois.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Millie E. Bates. Place of birth Illinois.

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 to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

An Interview with F. M. Bates, Elk City, Oklahoma.
By - Ethel Mae Yates, Investigator.
October 27, 1937.

On September 16, 1896, my nephew, Lewis Hart and I started for the Territory for the sole purpose of getting a home. I filed on a claim only to find out that the lawyer had made a mistake in the number and I had really filed one mile west of where I thought I was filing. The land was no good, just red hills, so after a long, tedious correspondence with the land office, with plenty of red tape, I was allowed to file again in Roger Mills County on Sandstorm Creek, three-fourths of a mile east of the Herring Ranch and one and one-half miles from where the town of Herring is now.

It took me a year to get my claim straightened out and when I got it all fixed I went back to Hood County, Texas, where I had come from.

On November 5, 1897, my father, B. F. Bates; my sister, Mrs. Sarah Hart and her five children; and a Mrs. Bazell and six children; Nora, my baby daughter, and I started for the Territory. My wife had died the year before. We brought with us three wagons and a hack, twenty

head of cattle and our work teams. We crossed Red River at Doan's Crossing; camped out nights and traveled every day but Sundays. There were seven grown young people in the bunch; they were lively and we had a nice trip. The last night we camped out we camped on Timber Creek and a snow came. The next morning the baby saw it and said, "Oh, look Daddy, they have poured salt out". When we came across the country there wasn't much of anything to be seen but horses, cattle and grass. We got here on December 5, 1897, were on the road just a month to the day. We then got busy making our dugouts. I made a dugout 14X16 feet. I cut logs and hauled them to a sawmill run by a Mr. Johnson in Snaky Bend over on the Washita, one mile from where Strong City now is. I walled my dugout up with cottonwood planks and covered it with galvanized tin; had to haul the tin from Quamah, Texas. For my stock I cut poles and made a frame and walled it up with prairie grass. I got some of my land broke out and put in a sod crop. I was keeping bachelor's hall at this time. Money was scarce and I would work some on my claim and then dodge out and try to find work to make a little money to get by on, which was very hard to do.

BATES, F. M.

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There were lots of cattlemen here; these ranchers did not want the 'old nesters' as they called them in here and some of them wouldn't hire us or buy our feed.

I went to church and Sunday school over at the Snaky Bend schoolhouse, which was built of logs. There was a ditch dug and the logs split and stood up end-ways and walled up with grass. It had a split log top covered with sod and a dirt floor.

In 1900 I was married to Miss Sallie E. Standifer, a pioneer girl of Cheyenne and about this time I got a job with a Hail Insurance Company collecting notes. A little later I got a job as assistant insurance adjuster. I found out that all of the good honest men were not dead and that all of the dishonest ones weren't either.

We would go over on the Washita River on plum and grape hunts. There were lots of fish and some game when we first came to the new country.

Neighbors were scarce and few between, but people loved each other and shared one another's joys and sorrows and we look back on those days with many pleasant memories.

I lived on my place twenty-five years, then sold it and moved to Elk City, which has been my home ever since.

My father, B. F. Bates, came and filed on a claim and went through the many trials that only pioneers knew. He has gone to rest and is laid away in the Fair Lawn Cemetery here at Elk City.