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

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on 3-25-37

1. Name Minda Geer Hardin

2. Post Office address Henryetta, Okla.

3. Residence address 14th and Corporation, and Hardin Studio

4. Date of birth Exact date unknown but thought 1875

5. Place of birth Thought Winfield Kansas

6. Name of father L.H. Geer Thought born S. Carolina

Other information about father Doctored among the
Indians.

7. Name of mother Geneva Moore McMillin S. Carolina

Other information about mother Died when I was real small.

8. of sheets attached 11

ce Kelley,
an-Pioneer History S-149,
5-37.

A PIONEER WOMAN
of the
Muskogee-Creek Nation
Interview with Mrs. Minda G. Hardin

In 1896 I lived with my father in Mounds. In 1897 I married John Ross. 1898 and 99 the railroad came to Henryetta. I came here and stopped with Jerry Williams a little while. The strip pit coal was talked about but I did not see it. We camped west of town, then south. Father called on the same families, Barnetts, Little Fish, Randalls and Lizzy Brown are some I remember. Then we went back to Mounds, where we had a house. Mounds had moved from the Twin Mounds to the railroad. My second boy was born March 12, 1900, near Cleveland, Okla. I came back to Mounds and we moved to Prague. Dr. McElhannon advised father to move to Henryetta. The McElhannon was a fine family. I came to live in Henryetta in 1902, I believe altho I had been here with father many times. The strip coal mines were at work then and many people lived near the pit. The Warden #1 and the Wise mines. The "Tent Town" at the mines had streets and alleys. The streets were clean and neat. Henryetta was small fine bunch people. The merchants sent meat and groceries to the tent towns every day. The Henryetta grew fast and had some tough people in it. The Indians would shoot up the town, run their horses down the hill north of town at brake necks.

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shooting up and down the streets. The streets were so rocky we could hardly walk. Mr. Morgan had a Grocery store with a board platform in front and not nailed. We called a ride walk. Climb up on it then on some rocks. Joe Baker had a store we were proud of, White had a Hardware. A little white house was the church for all denominations. Dr. McElhannon was the Preacher. I would get children to gather with my uncle M.M. Geer, and he would explain the Bible under the trees. Dr. Shonigal was here in 1904. There was trouble among the Indians about allotting. Father was busy in every direction. Perry Pound came here in 1901, and put in the dray business. Bill Harris had the Phone switch board, one line from Okmulgee which everybody used. Perry Pound also had the Express business. said the merchants were good people. They were all boosters for the town, and good roads. We women worked the roads by taking wagons and teams and gathering up the rocks and hauling them to a hole and throwing them out where the Georgian Hotel is now. Father had an interest in a ranch west of town near Okemah which caused trouble all of the time. Cow thieves were plentiful we had trouble with out-laws all the ~~th~~ time. Everybody was a law in themselves. If a man would ride up to my door, draw a gun on me and tell me to get him something to eat, well, I did it and asked no questions. They were well behaved if no questions were asked. I have seen toughs shoot at some-

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one's feet to make them dance. The toughs were more wicked than the out-laws were. The cowboys were fine fellows and kindhearted, most of them from good families in some other state. They came to the Indian Territory to make money and send home to their parents or saved it to get married. Sometimes some of the toughs would run into these, steal some cattle and put the blame on them and get them into trouble. One case was the Green boy. The Rounders were a bunch that had their own laws. For an example; there was a big barbeque on Honey Creek in a pecan grove. I believe it was in 1904. The Big Round Up was that fall. This was the 4th of July. The table was of boards making a square. Women and children on the inside and the men on the outside. Many cowboys and a few rounders. This was the law: while eating one boy put some salt in the other's coffee when he wasn't looking. He pulled his gun and shot the boy for doing it, for it was an insult to them and not a joke.

Father died at Mounds in 1904, this was a shock to me. I took my children and uncle, who was living with me, and moved to Tulsa. One block south of the railroad station. This was the third time I had lived at Tulsa and I was so lonely without father that I moved back in 1905. I started to taking boarders, as I was a widow at that time, at the place where the Embrees have a residence now. I was very happy as I could do charity work, help in sickness and death, go to church. I had a woman to do the house work. I de-

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lighted to get in my buggy, take my children and go visit the Indian families I considered my friends. I married W.P. Pound (Perry) in 1907, he was an Indian Interpreter. We was now in the Crazy Snake War. We had trouble, too, with the negros. We was in sympathy with Chito Harjo. I had heard Him make the most wonderful speech in Tulsa in 1906 I had ever heard. I think he was a wonderful man. I beleived in allotting the land to the Indians, fullbloods, but not to the negros. nor the treaty compelling the Indians to free the slaves and give them equal rights in land in the Indian Territory. this was unjust to the Indians. Perry Pound was out on his poney trying to keep and make peace as he was a Deputy Marshall-Indian Interpreter. After the negros were brought to town, he helped to the razors of the negros, after the guns were already taken off, while they were lined up on 4th Street. I have a picture of this if you want it.

We lived on the corner of 4th and Gentry when Albert Bates was shot down by the negro. For two weeks after that guards were kept posted. The negros were run out of town. We were working to hold all our school district together as it was very large. We wanted a U.S. Post Office Bldg., and the County Seat. But not enough were interested in this, Okmulgee got the County Seat. Okmulgee should have been the

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Capital of Oklahoma but the Indian Territory wasn't interested in that and Oklahoma Territory was, so they got it left over there. Folk were interested in the Jim Crow law making the separation of the white and negro children in schools, also the Child Labor law and the Miner's Union, which gave them more time and money. They had had to work from early till late, now they could be with their families more.

My father had taught me to forget self and do for others and I would live longer. My uncle died in 1907 at the age of 98.

In 1909 we sold out and moved to Honey Creek, Mr. Pound drilled water wells for people all around. 1913 we moved to Okmulgee, Madill and back to Henryetta. In 1922 Mr. Pound died and with Small Fox and I went to work in the Studio with Joe Hardin. We were married in 1923.

I have four married daughters living in Henryetta.

Mrs. Anna Mackay

Mrs. Cora Marlor

Mrs. Mildred Walker

Mrs. Grace Kelley. *The writer of this interview*

My three boys died before they were grown.

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Salt Springs is at the head of Salt Creek which empties into Skull Creek which empties into North Fork. I believe it would be in creek county now. People went to the spring and got salt by boiling the water down. The cattle, deer and animals would go and lick the ground. Salt creek that empties into North Fork was very salty, too salty to cook navy beans in, or to make coffee with. On the Lopez Ranch on 4-mile Four Mile Creek was a really salty spring, about eleven miles northwest of Henryetta. That was on a branch of the Ozark Trail. South of this, past the store was a spring that was good for the health and the Indians camped there in hot weather. I camped there lots of times. It is two miles east of "now Spring Hill"

Fruit and Nuts

Wild fruit was in abundance here, every place in the Creek or Muskogee Nation. Indian Peaches: Red purple free stones and cling stone. Many plums midsummer and fall. Grapes some were found on the hills where it was rocky, large in size. Huckelberries, Raspberries, Gooseberries, Strawberries, dewberries, Blackberries, Crab Apples, Persimmons, Cherries, Black-haws, Walnuts, Pecans, Hickory nuts and others.

Not far from Salt Springs was an old house, was said to be the first store in the Creek Nation owned by a Mr. Warfield.

Near Tahlequah was a very old Masonic Hall that had real glass windows.

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West of Henryetta on the County line, about one mile north of the highway. An old Masonic building stood there a long time ago. The emblem was on it in Indian Territory days.

High Spring

High Spring one and a half west of High Council Hill on the same hill. Southwest from Haskel. The U.S. Government made this spring in 1834. Six tribes use to meet and hold Council here, the Indians got paid and drew rations. This was a shipping post for cattle drove here. There were corrals but mostly the cowboys herded the cattle. Men came to buy cattle and send it on to Redfork or Kansas. This is not far from the old time Moore ranch, called Moon Ranch.

Crazy Snake

Chito Harjo called the House of Warriors and the House of Kings together, six miles south of Henryetta, Old Hickory Stomp Ground, ~~for~~ to preserve the treaty of 1825. Proclaimed the re-establishment of the ancient law and courts. Acknowledged by the U.S.A., the Great White Father at Washington, who had promised to them and their descendents as long as grass grew and water flowed. Crazy Snake had 5,000 followers. He did not recognise the new treaty of 1866, where the Indian had to free their slaves and divide with them, give land to the railroads to cross their lands, and divide witht the strange Indians also. He pronounced Hickory Stomp Capitol

The Orphan Home at Okmulgee was a wonderful place. George Riley Hall and Alec Posey were teachers. The Mail Route and Stage started in 1894. The roads were good. At first these roads were traveled by oxen teams. The men walked and drove. several wagons would go together, and they would have a bull whacker to keep the oxen moving when they would come to a stream. The oxen would go to the deepest water and lay down, so it took a strong man to keep them moving and get across.

Tulsa was first called Tulsey Town or Stomp Ground.

Lots of wild game was here, Deer, turkeys, squirrel, fox, and the streams were full of good fish. The Indians only caught what they wanted to eat. Wild turkey came up and ate with the horses at the barn.

The Indians worked in the fields and grew all kind of food. There was lots of wild honey. They would cook on a camp fire and have a pretty stove in the house. I don't know anything about Indians for their intellect is so high that the white people can't understand them. They believe in the Great Spirit which is higher than ~~ear~~ anything on earth. They listen or watch for his guidance all the time. Mary Burgess told me she could see the Great Spirit which was the size of her finger, a bright light. She would follow it and it would take her to some sick person. She showed me the

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spot of ground north of Dewar where the Indians stopped when they were brought here. Her family were so grieved and lonely, sad leaving their homes behind. They prayed on this spot of ground and cried and lay on the ground. Nothing would grow, not even grass after that.

There were as many horse thieves and as there cattle thieves but the Anti-Horse-Thief Association put a stop to that. They would brand the horse on the left jaw with a C and put a C on the saddles. I'm sending a picture of the certificate which Perry Pound, my husband, had. I still have the certificate.

Indian Women's Dress, Ects.

The dresses were long and would sweep the ground, some were lovely. Some wore long hair braided like the men with buckskin in it. Some with beaded bands, some plain braids. Most of them went barefooted in the summer at home.

Black walnut hulls boiled with salt make all shades of brown dye.

Poke berries boiled with salt makes red. The seeds make purple.

Ink balls off of oak trees makes ink to write.

Leaves of mulberries make green or purple.

Simpson weed take out mildew, from clothing.

Wild tansy and sour milk is good for skin trouble, wash in it

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The turkey quill makes a turkey caller or whistle.

Gourds were used in many ways besides making dippers.

Indians like pretty teeth and use charcoal to keep them white.

Long time ago they burned cobs of corn to make ashes, put ashes in a vessel and pour water on. Let stand overnight and let settle to make soda for bread making.

Strip Opening

I was at Arkansas with my uncle Henry Silker a Photographer. I don't remember if he was with Mr. Prettyman in the Picture Gallery or not but I was there for the opening of the Cherokee Strip outlet. There were people every place waiting for the day. Uncle had a one horse wagon fixed to make load plates in the dark. We started and went to the line of the Cherokee Strip. On the Meridian line, straight south of Arkansas City past John McMillin's apple orchard, to the line and turned west, to Mr. Uncle said he thought he would make the run and get a claim, but when he saw the mob of people, wagons, wheelbarrows, on horseback, on foot, buggies, oxen. Some with children, plows, dogs, cats, everything together. He said he didn't want land he wanted pictures. We got on the roof of an old house, right on the line, where we could see all the way. It is a prairie for miles.

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The Chilocco School grounds and buildings were like this
North

| <u>State Line</u> | | School |
|-------------------|------------|--------|
| People here | & - | ■ ■ ■ |
| | h - | ■ ■ ■ |
| | e - | ■ ■ ■ |
| | r | |
| | e and here | |

South

This is hard to tell, when the soldier with a American flag and whistle, on a horse, gave the signal at twelve o'clock, everybody started to rug at once. What a sight. All joined up together trying to get a stake or flag up on the ground at once. But I was not thinking much but kept handing plates to him and putting the exposed ones up, and try to stand up on a roof at the same time. I had not noted myself but I was crying and when he wanted to know why, I said that I wanted to go to my father. He had gone a little way in the Strip but I begged to go to the City. When I joined my father, who had made the race from the South side of the Outlet. He rode horseback with M.M. Geer to help the people that might need him. They were not far from Perry when his horse jumped a ditch and fell. Braking his arm and shoulder blade.

Not long after that we sold out in Okla. Territory and moved to Mounds I.T. But we didn't try long to live in a house. Father was old and liked to be camping out and had an interest in this country, building, he felt, a home.