

FLETCHER, ELLA.

INTERVIEW

10281

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

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#10281

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae YatesThis report made on (date) March 22 1938

1. Name Ella Fletcher
2. Post Office Address Sayre, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) Route 1
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 13 Year 1872
5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
6. Name of Father R. C. Barnhart Place of birth Tennessee  
Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_
7. Name of Mother Abbarrila Place of birth Kentucky  
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 6.

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

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Ethel Mae Yates  
Investigator  
March 22, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Ella Fletcher  
Sayre, Oklahoma.

I came with my parents, R. C. Barnhart and Abbarrila, from Montague County, Texas, to the Indian Territory in 1883 when I was eleven years old. We came in covered wagons and first settled near Pauls Valley where Father took an Indian lease from an Indian named Zack Gardner, who owned lots of land at that time.

Father farmed and we lived in a two-room house and a tent; the house had a square hole cut out for a window with wooden shutters.

My brother, Luther Barnhart who was a great hunter, could get up early in the mornings and kill wild turkeys and he killed one Bob cat. Father killed one deer and he thought he had done something.

We lived there three years and then moved over near Chickasha and took a ten year lease; Father had to put his own improvements on this place. This was before there was a Chickasha and our trading post and post office which was

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#10281

-2-

ten miles away was called Troud. Father hauled lumber and built us a two-room house where we lived and farmed seven years, then sold our lease and went to Washita County in 1893 and filed on a claim near Bessie.

Father made a dugout 14 x 20 ft. covered it with logs and dirt and hired a German man to plaster the walls with some kind of mortar they fixed and mixed with grass; it was just plaster and the walls would never cave off. We then white washed it with lime and we thought it looked nice. We made a fireplace in one end and put a stove in the other and this was our bedroom, living room and kitchen and eight of us lived in it.

We would go over on the Washita River and fish, my brother and a man made a fish trap which they set in the river and caught one fish that weighed fifty pounds.

Not long after we came here an Indian killed a Mr. Breeding and the law got the Indian into a cellar to keep the white men from mobbing him. The sheriff deputized a bunch of men to help him guard the Indian. I had two brothers who were with the group that wanted to mob the

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#10281

-3-

Indian and the man I later married was helping guard him. They had to call the soldiers out and they took the Indian to jail. That was one proud Indian when the soldiers left with him; he was kept in for a long time and I think that he was finally let go.

We didn't like where our claim was so Father sold out and we moved over near where Cordell is and got another place. Father built a sod house, and we went to a sod school, Sunday School and church; we only had services on Sunday mornings.

We hauled water from the Washita, a distance of five miles and drove our cattle to the river to water them. We hauled our wood for fuel five miles and would also go out on the creeks and hunt plums. Father was a farmer and that was about the only kind of work he did.

While we lived there I met the man I later married, J. S. Fletcher. We were married in 1899, and went over to his claim near Wood which he had secured in the Cheyenne and Arapaho country in 1892. He had made a little dugout put down a well and fenced seventy acres. He had to go to

BLEECHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#10281

-4-

Mince for supplies. He had a ninty days leave so he went back over in the Chickasaw Nation to make money to prove up and when he came back he found that a family had moved in and taken possession of his place. They had filed a contest, had hauled a load of logs to make a house and said that they were going to stay. Mr. Fletcher got his Winchester and six-shooter and told them to get out so they loaded up and went to Cordell. They found out that they had violated the law by getting inside the fence so they never did come back, not even to get their logs. My husband used those logs in building a house and had a house built when I went there.

We had to haul water which was guppy and we got our wood on Elk Creek.

My husband was a cattleman so he hired a man to do the farming but the weather was so dry that we didn't make very much in 1900.

Free grass played out so we sold out and started out in search of grass. We stopped over near where Texola is now and lived in a tent, cooked on camp fire and hauled guppy

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#10281

-5-

water seven miles. We stayed there one summer and lost nearly all of our cattle on account of feed shortage and gyp water. We intended to go on over in Texas but were quarantined on account of the ticks and while we were there the railroad started through.

We left there in 1902 and went to Merritt and lived in an old rock house with the centipedes. While there something kept getting our chickens at night so we set a steel trap and one morning when we got up we had caught a big old bobcat. We lived there one year, then went out on the plains two years after which we came to Butler one year then moved over west of Arapaho and lived two years. We made all these travels in covered wagons. Part of the time we camped out, part of the time we lived in tents and part of the time we lived in the wagons and cooked on campfires.

When we left Arapaho we went over to my father's place near Cordell and lived on my father's place until 1907 when we moved to Clinton and put in a dairy and lived there and ran it eighteen years, after which we came here

FLETCHER, ELLA

INTERVIEW

A10281

-6-

one mile west and one mile of Berlin which has been our home ever since.

Father and mother are both dead, buried at Mountain View.