

FUSS, CLARA DRUCILLA PRUNTY. INTERVIEW #4742

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

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Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncanreport made on (date) June 19, 1937Name Clara Drucilla Prunty FussPost Office Address Medford, OklahomaResidence address (or location) Franklin HotelDATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 31 Year 1868Place of birth Spring Hill, Johnson County, KansasName of Father Jediah Prunty Place of birth Chinston, W. VirginiaOther information about father Born Oct. 26, 1827Name of Mother Clarissa Brown Place of birth OhioOther information about mother August 3, 1828.

Lived on the farm all her life.

For 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 8.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mrs. Fuss was born in Kansas, in a poor family. There were so many in the family that the father could hardly keep the family together. Mr. Prunty, her father, would come down in the Territory to hunt deer, buffalo, and prairie chicken. He also freighted down in here to the Indian trading posts. By doing this, he kept his family supplied with food. The older children did the farm work.

Mrs. Fuss did not know what it was to have shoes, hardly, for her father would take hides to make moccasins. At the age of fifteen years, Mrs. Fuss got her first pair of shoes and they were boy's shoes. She was so thrilled over them that she thought her daddy was very rich.

When Mr. Prunty came to the Territory, the children begged to accompany him, and he finally consented. He would haul hay for the ranches down to the Melt Bennett Ranch, also to the Sewell Stockade. The trip was a great treat to any child.

In the winter of 1885, there was one of the worst blizzards she had seen. The people had to sit up all

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night to keep fire, as a number of people were found frozen to death, and pigs, chickens, cats, and dogs were found frozen, sitting, standing or lying down. The storm raged for three days, closing in many a pioneer farmer in their shelters. It was a great loss to them having lost much stock.

When it cleared, Mr. Prunty started down to the Cherokee Strip to find some work. Two of the older children accompanied him. They ran on to a farmer wanting some hides freighted back to Kansas to the closest shipping point. Mr. Prunty undertook this, and the work continued for a few weeks. This helped the family quite a bit.

The years went by, the family struggling along. The family learned that the Strip was to be opened up. On September 14, there were four of them started out to make the Run. On the 15th, they stood in line all day to get their registration numbers. They camped all night on the Strip line, six miles west of Caldwell. The next day at 11:30 A.M., they had their lunch, then at

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twelve noon, they were lined up on the line. The soldiers fired the pistols. That was the signal for all to go. What a mad race it was, one trying to beat the other to a certain claim if he had been down in here and located a spot that he intended to make for a home especially.

Mrs. Fuss came down with her brother in a spring wagon, staking her claim four miles north of Medford. The time she made the run in was 40 minutes from the time she started until she staked her claim. The brother went on to see if he could locate the rest of the brothers. He found them but not one of the rest staked a claim.

The sun was very hot, the wind and dust were blowing a dusty gale. Mrs. Fuss was all alone and she was almost ready to leave the claim for she had no shelter or food. She was very blue and disgusted. About the time she was ~~ready to give up,~~ her brother came back with some food.

They went back up to the State line to their camp for the night; the next morning they came back down and

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and spaded up some sod. Then went back up to the State line camp. They then went back home for a few weeks to get a few things together so she could come and stay on her homestead, also get enough money together (\$15.00) to file on her place.

After securing enough money, her brother, Charlie, came down with her. She then went on to Enid to file, had to wait for a week before she could file, her number being in the 6000's. After she filed, she and her brother went back to Kansas.

On February 1, 1894, they came back to the homestead, her brother built a small shed for her out of foot-wide boards, putting lath over the cracks where the boards joined together. It was not boarded up inside. It had one small window on the south. After the small house was completed in the early part of the month, during the latter part of the same month, they had a terrible snow storm and they had to sit with overshoes on, keep the fire going all night and day, and then they could not keep warm enough. By the time spring

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came, they were almost out of fuel to burn. Brother Charlie came down, bringing with him a plow so as to break sod. They broke 60 acres. Mrs. Fuss followed up behind the plow, planting corn by hand.

During the month of March, Mrs. Fuss started to dig a well, got as far as her shoulders in depth, and her brother and one of the neighbors finished the well, but it was salty. Then she had to haul drinking water one mile.

Mrs. Fuss went back home with her brother so she could bring down her possessions. The things she brought was a "topsy" stove with a drum on the stove pipe so she could bake, with two plates, two cups, two saucers, six big bowls, two small bowls, one waterbucket, one frying pan, one dutch oven, spoons (whittled out of wood), livestock, one team of horses, two cows, one dozen chickens, one dog, two cats, and bedding.

After getting settled, she got homesick for the Sunday school and church. So, in March, she went to Medford to see if they had any Sunday School or Church.

She found they were having community gatherings which all denominations attended. It was held in the old Hay building where the Old Commercial Hotel stands now. They also had Endeavor for the younger people. At these meetings, Mrs. Fuss met her husband. A courtship started, then on March 21, 1895, they were married. The marriage ceremony took place in Mr. Fuss' home, three miles southwest of Medford. A number of relatives attended. Rev. E. Bachman officiated at the ceremony. ~~Each of the relatives, friends and neighbors~~ brought a covered dish.

They then moved on her homestead, Mr. Fuss building a larger house. Mrs. Fuss papered the inside with newspapers.

In the fall in 1895, Mr. Fuss ditched for water but found it was salty the same as the other well, so had to continue hauling water to drink. They drove the cattle six miles to another pasture so they could have water to drink.

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In the year of 1896, they put out more corn and wheat. The corn crop was a failure, burning up.

In the fall of 1896, Mr. and Mrs. Fuss would go out on the prairie and pick up cow chips to burn, stacking them in a dry place. Many a day they would make these trips as that was all they had to burn.

In the year of 1897, they planted corn again which resulted in a bumper crop, the same as the wheat crops had been. Mrs. Fuss got her first new dresser.

That winter was the happiest year they had had for quite a while. They attended the new church that was erected, the First Christian Church, and spent many a happy Sunday at this house of worship. They were among the charter members of this congregation.

Many an evening, Mrs. Fuss would turn the hand sheller to shell the corn. They sold enough corn to buy a cook stove.

The years that followed were prosperous years for them. They now run the Franklin Hotel on Highway 81, on the west side of the street in Ledford.
