

GABLE, CARRIE

INTERVIEW

#8526

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GABLE, CARRIE,

INTERVIEW
LEGEND & STORY FORM

8526

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field worker's name Augusta H. Guster

This report made on (date) August 22 1937

This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. Carrie Gable

Address Geary, Oklahoma, West Main St.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe White

Origin and history of legend or story Pioneering in Oklahoma

Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 12

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Augusta H. Custer,
Interviewer,
August 22, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Carrie Gable,
West Main Street, Geary, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Gable is the daughter of the late P.Y. Tonkinson. He was a contractor for public work while living in Pennsylvania, and tried to farm after coming to Oklahoma. The following story is told by Mrs. Gable.

My husband and I left Hubbell, Nebraska, January 1, 1894. He drove a team to a covered wagon, and I drove a team of mares to a buggy. We arrived at Kenny's Store and post office, in Canadian County, in the evening of January 13th. Enehoe, pronounced N-ne-ho was the name of the post office. We stayed there all night, as there were no roads in this country, just Indian trails which took you around the heads of the canyons.

We had shipped our furniture and farm implements to El Reno, and later went there to get them. That was about twenty-five miles. I had a brother living one mile east and one half mile south of Northville. This was a store and post office kept by Henry North. The farm is now owned

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by his daughter, Miss Ester North.

My brother was living in a one room dugout, which had a hard dirt floor, and the side walls were of native dirt, just dug out of the hillside. We lived there for awhile, and I remember I had quite a time keeping my bed clothes from coming in contact with the dirt, as I did not want them soiled. The roof was of poles with grass over them, and dirt piled upon that. The dugout was in the bank and the front was built up of logs.

There was a door and one window in the south end. Well do I remember one time when we had a hard wind and snow, and this doorway piled full of snow. It was packed so hard, that we had a very difficult time getting out, and cleaning out the entrance.

El Reno was our trading point. We cut wood, hauled it there and sold it for \$1.50 a rick and bought flour, sugar, coffee, and baking powder. Wood sold for \$3.00 per load, and later the price came down to \$1.00 per rick.

We rented school land or leased Indian land for many

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years. Then when my father died, I bought the home place and owned it for many years. Our crops consisted of kaffir and corn. The first year when our corn was just in the roasting ear stage, there came several days of hot winds and burned it up. We had raised corn in Nebraska and thought we could ^{not} get along without raising it in Oklahoma. We cut the stalks for fodder, but my plans for canning a lot of corn were blasted.

The native grass was waist high, all over the prairies. There was plenty of wild turkey and quail, but not many deer. We did not have a milch cow for several years after we came here. There were plenty of Texas range cattle in this part of the country, but they would have to be roped and hog tied before they could be milked. And at that, they did not give much milk.

The government gave to any farmer who wanted to try raising wheat, enough seed to plant five acres. My brother took advantage of this offer, and my father cut that first crop of wheat with a cradle, bound the bundles and thrashed it for seed.

My brother also had a sorghum mill, and we had all the sorghum molasses that we could use. The neighbors brought

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their cane to the mill and helped make molasses. This was used to sweeten cookies and make ginger bread.

Times began to look so hard to me that I got out to look for a school to teach. I drove one horse to a two wheeled cart. The roads were not good for a two horse team, and were very rough. It was hard to keep a horse walking in the center of a road between two paths. I went first to Watonga and then east. I succeeded in getting a school near Omega. A Mr. Lawyer was a member of the school board. I was to receive \$25.00 per month and take warrants for my pay. It was to be a three months school. If my warrants had to be cashed before the money was in the treasury, there would have to be a discount.

While coming home I saw a group of Indians at the bank of the North Canadian River, which was much higher than when I had gone across three days before. As I knew my mother and husband would be anxious about me, I asked if I could cross.

The Indians said yes, it would be safe. They knew the river better than I and told me where to land on the other side. I drove in. The water swam the horse, and the

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cart managed to stay upright, but my feet were dragged in the water. It was quite an experience.

My husband went to Oklahoma City and worked in the harvest for \$1.00 per day.

With some of my school money I bought our first cow. I gave one of my warrants. The cow cost \$15.00 and I had to take a \$5.00 discount and that left me five dollars out of one warrant. This was an excellent milch cow.

My school was held in a new church building. There was a row of seats around the sides, and a place for the books up in the front of the room.

We were never afraid of the Indians, except one time when some of them had been drinking and they followed my sisters on their way to town. The girls stopped at a neighbors for protection and they were quite nervous about it at the time.

I taught two terms of school at Richland, in Blaine County, six miles north of where Geary is today. I was to get \$25.00 per month for a term of six months. I got room and board with Mrs. J. R. Smith for \$2.00 per week. She lived on a farm out near the school. The second year I

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taught I had a room rented, and kept two of my brothers and two sisters with me and sent them to school. I had no trouble getting a school after the first term. I taught on a First Grade County Certificate and attended the County Normal in Watonga for two weeks every summer.

I taught part of one term in the Geary school, when a teacher resigned before the school was out.

I bought a cow every term of school that I taught, and with the increase we soon had a nice bunch of milch cows. Then we milked the cows and I made butter to sell which sold for ten cents a pound in El Reno. When the market became over supplied with butter, I made cheese and that brought twelve and a half cents a pound. Cheese kept better than butter, when we had no ice, and the market was twenty-five miles away.

We traded for groceries and got Four X or McLaughlins/^{XXXX,} Arbuckles, or Lions coffee for eight and a third cents a pound, or twelve pounds of coffee for one dollar. It was better coffee than we get now for thirty cents a pound.

The Lion head on the cover of the Lion Coffee resembled the Lion Head seen so much in the movies on the

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Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer pictures.

These were the three standard brands of coffee sold in those days.

Among the pupils who attended my schools were; Earl Barranger, manager of the moving picture show here, Nannie Huff, of Huffs Confectionery, Harris Coil, farmer; Orlando Ringleman of the I.G. A. store, Miner, Carry and A. C. Tolle, Mattie Frazee, Nannie Scott. These later taught school, Mrs. Zobisch, Tom Ballew, of Anadarko, and Mrs. Oscar Ruth.

I have always been proud to know that very few of my pupils ever got into any serious trouble. Most of them turned out to be respected citizens of the community in which they lived.

I brought quite a supply of dresses with me when I came from Nebraska. I managed when teaching to get me a new dress once in awhile, although I went pretty threadbare sometimes. Children's garments were often made of flour sacks, as^{were} many other articles of wearing apparel, and pillow slips, tea towels, window curtains, and table covers.

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Indians who needed a little coffee, flour or meat, would often trade their moccasins for them. Mr. Gable has often secured his much needed foot covering in this way. The Indians would also trade off the clothing given them by the government for anything that they wanted. In this way, some of the men got clothing when they needed it.

I had a negro woman neighbor one time, who was just about my size. She came to my house and told me that she had to go to town, and asked if she might wear one of my dresses. I did not want to offend her, neither did I care to have her wearing one of my dresses. I did not let her have it.

Social affairs.

There were Christmas Trees, and entertainments at different places, Easter dinners and picnics in summer. One time I went to a big Fourth of July celebration at Julson Store and post office. There were also revival meetings held in groves, and a Reverend Barker, Baptist Minister, held one at the school house near the cemetery south of Geary. This was an outstanding meeting.

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The Members of the Church of Christ do not believe in the women speaking in public, but Mrs. Biswell was a woman who did not agree with this code of the church rules.

When people were sick they usually sent for Dr. Powell and he never refused to go as do some of the doctors of today.

Our water supply came from springs or dug wells. The men would select a low spot and dig there for water. Sometimes these wells would not be near the house and often water would have to be hauled in barrels or tubs.

One time the county commissioners decided to build two bridges across the canyons near where we lived. I wanted to make some money, and asked to board the men who worked on the construction of the bridges. One county commissioner, (I cannot recall his name) had only one arm. He was boarding with me when he had the misfortune to break his only good arm, while working at the bridge. I had to feed him for two days until he was taken some place else when he could receive care.

Thanksgiving came while I had these men. I felt that I would like to have something in keeping ^{with} the day, and a change of food. But I could not think of anything to fix. Mr. Gable

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was helping my father cut cedar logs for the new house they were going to build on my father's place. A bunch of wild turkeys came straying past where they were working, and Mr. Gable shot one with a twenty-two rifle. This big gobbler settled the question of my Thanksgiving dinner, and I surely was pleased.

I was disappointed when I settled my grocery bill, and found that we had had a good living but I had nothing left worth mentioning.

We always tried to raise a good garden, and while I had no jars to can vegetables the first few years, we dried everything that we could. I dried beans, corn, squash, peaches, and apples for winter use.

One summer we had an abundant crop of peaches. An old Indian came to the house, and I asked him if he would like to have some peaches. He said, "no, me no want any, a long time ago a man with a long white beard give me seed, and me plant, and now me have plenty peaches" That old man was my father.

Indian Mission.

There was an Indian Mission on the South Canadian

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River, six miles southwest of Geary. A Reverend Sanford had charge. He would receive clothing from the East that he was supposed to give out to the Indians who needed it. He kept a lot of boxes stored in a room of a house near the South Canadian River. The river began to rise, the flood water got in the house and the clothing became wet. This clothing was unpacked and spread on the prairie near the Mission to dry. Then anyone who wanted the clothes was allowed to take them.

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Old man Larriett was one of the big chiefs of the Arapaho Indians when we came here. He had two wives. I remember that one of them gave birth to twins and we went to the camp to see the babies.

A little crippled boy named little Antelope died, and we went to his funeral. He is buried on what is known as the Spark's place, four miles west of Geary.

Mr. Gable leased Indian leases for several years. There were several graves and he cut poles and set posts at the corners and one in the middle on the sides. He nailed the poles on the posts. This made a fence around the graves. In time, these got torn down and today there is no sign of the

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graves.

My father had a large family and he could not have stayed through those trying days if it had not been for the fourteen dollars pension he received quarterly. This check of forty-two dollars came regularly every quarter. These same pension kept many of the pioneer families from leaving this new country.

We leased our farm and came to Geary, where we had a grocery store, in 1900 and kept it until 1926. Since that time we have lived here, but have not been actively engaged in business.