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

44042

Field Worker's name Ethel V. ElderThis report made on (date) June 11 19371. Name Mrs. Emily Cavy Gorbett2. Post Office Address Waurika, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) Missouri Avenue4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 8 Year 18665. Place of birth Tyler Town, Pike County, Mississippi6. Name of Father Benjamin Grubbs Place of birth MississippiOther information about father Born 1829-died July 30, 18937. Name of Mother Eleanor Jane Gartman Place of birth Pike Co., Miss.Other information about mother Born 1832-died Aug. 12, 1918

Father buried Baldwin graveyard--mother buried Ryan Cemetery.

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 7.

I was born April 8, 1866, in Tyler Town, Pike County, Mississippi. I lived there with my parents and attended Darbone School in Pike County, Mississippi, until I was about fifteen years old. Father's name was Benjamin Grubbs, born in 1829 in Mississippi, died July 30, 1893, buried at Old Baldwin Graveyard just north of Ryan, Oklahoma. Mother's name was Eleanor Jane Gartman, born in 1832, in Pike County, Mississippi, died August 12, 1918, buried at Ryan Cemetery. There were eleven children in our family. Some of them died before we left Mississippi; there were only three girls and two boys that came with my parents from Mississippi.

MIGRATION TO OKLAHOMA

In 1883 my parents and several other families started from Mississippi. We came across the Mississippi River in emigrant cars. The whole train was run into the large steamship (name of ship unknown) and all the people had to get out of the train and ride in another place on the ship. The seats on this ship ^{were} ↑ small benches. We were nine hours crossing the Gulf. We first came to Limestone County, Texas, stayed there a short time, came to Oklahoma in 1892, and settled where the town of Ryan, Oklahoma, is now located.

FORDS

We forded Red River at the Beaver Creek Crossing. We did not know anything about quick sand, so we got stuck. Father put us children on the horses' backs and unhitched the horses from the wagon and finally got us and the horses out. He left the wagon there in the quick sand all night. They surely worked hard nearly all day before they managed to get it across.

On their arrival in the Territory we lived in a tent at the place called Ryan's Camp. Later the town of Ryan, Oklahoma, was built there. My father was a farmer and he sold oats to the men when they came to build the first railroad through Ryan.

The first church I ever attended was the Methodist Church at Ryan. Every summer we would look forward to the time of "old camp meetin'." Many times we would have to cross Beaver Creek in a skiff at Rocky Ford Crossing, and carry our provisions, etc. When the weather would be fair father and mother would hitch up the old ox wagon and load up all us children and away we would go to meetin'. We drove about seven or nine miles to the China Grove Camp Meetin'. We would go every day for two weeks

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or as long as the meetin' lasted. Those were the good old days I never shall forget. The way they made the lights for the camp meetin' they would throw up a big mound of dirt like a derrick and put several large pine knots on top and set them afire to make lights and they would burn for hours and then they would put on some more knots when these would go out. We made our own candles for lights in our homes.

We got our provisions from Belcher and Henrietta, Texas. It would take father about two or three days to make the trip by wagon and team. Sometimes he would have to wade across Red River and carry the provisions across on his back when the river would be up, then wade back and bring the wagon and team across.

MAIL ROUTES

Our mail was carried by horseback from the old post-office called Baldwin. We would get it sometimes twice a week and sometimes just once a week. The first mail carrier was named Walter Roberts.

EPIDEMICS--MENINGITIS

Our first doctor's name was Doctor Blanchard. He did not stay very long. Our next nearest doctor lived at

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Fleetwood (forgot his name). He would walk sometimes and would go in a buggy sometimes and cross the creek in a skiff when the water was up high.

The meningitis broke out very very bad, and all the doctors were scared to death of it. The only doctor we could get was a Mexican, Doctor Alvin. He would go to see as many of the sick ones as he could get to. He rode in what we called a wagonette. He would put a little stove of some kind inside to keep from freezing to death, and away he went. There were many died at this time. I lost one of my brothers. This was thirty-six years ago.

FURNITURE

I never saw a heating stove until I came to Texas when I was about sixteen years old. We all used old fashioned fire places, did all our cooking on fire place in homemade ovens and big skillets. We used homemade furniture, made from oak trees. Our bed springs were made by running ropes across from side to side and head to foot of the bed and then checked; then a cow hide was put over them to protect the homemade feather beds. Our mattresses were homemade too; they were made of dried shucks and hay. Chairs were made with cow hides stretched over the bottom very tight.

SOAPS

In the early days we had to make all our soap. We cut down an oak tree, took the logs and burned them and then put the ashes in a hopper--this hopper was a barrel with the end out. We put the shucks in first and then the ashes and then poured water in to form lye. When the lye was a clear red color it was drained off and mixed with grease and then boiled down to make the soap. This lye was tested on a chicken feather; if it would eat the fuzz off the feather it was ready for use; if not it was discarded and more made.

CUSTOMS OF WASHING

Our wash tub was made from beach trees. The tree was cut into about four foot lengths and then hollowed out like a trough, then smoothed out on the inside. We did not know of anything like a wash board; we used a battling stick to beat the dirt out of the clothes, then when they were finished they were hung on the old garden picket fence to dry.

HEIRLOOMS

I have in my possession my grandfather's wedding vest, which was made by hand and is over one hundred and fifty

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years old. It is made something like the vests the men wear today. It is in very good condition, has never been washed.

MISCELLANEOUS

We had an old time dinner bell that we always rang when we had the meals ready for the men to come in from the field to eat. If it rang any other time we always knew that somebody was in trouble, and every body left his work and went to see what the trouble was.

We raised a gourd that we used for milk buckets, and also used some for drinking purposes, as we did not know what a dipper was in those days.

A friend of mine from Washington sent me some sample cotton seed when I was living on the farm, when I was left a widow. I planted those seeds and raised the cotton; then I picked the cotton off the seed by hand, carded it, and spun it into thread, and then made a frame and wove this thread into a bed spread, a pair of pillow shams, and some curtains for my windows. All these are in good condition today. I am going to have a picture of this for history.