

GREEN, ANNA L.

INTERVIEW

10169

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma #10169

GREEN, ANNA L. INTERVIEW.

Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) March 14, 1938

1. Name Anna L. Green

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 11 Year 1876

5. Place of birth Illinois

6. Name of Father W. M. Spies Place of birth Germany

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Kate Spies Place of birth Germany

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

An Interview with Anna L. Green, Elk City, Oklahoma.  
By - Ethel Mae Yates, Investigator.  
March 14, 1938.

In the Summer of 1900 my husband, Henry Green, and my father came to the Territory and filed on some claims three miles east of old Doxey, which was then in Roger Mills County, but is now Beckham County. After filing they came back home which was at that time in Nebraska. After they came back we had a sale and got ready to start for the new country and were ready to start by November 1st. There were Father, Mother, a sick brother and his family, a Mr. Royce and our family and we traveled in four covered wagons and one buggy. We cooked every meal we ate with sticks and cornstalks and when we got up into Kansas we found plenty of cornstalks to burn. I drove over the first swinging bridge that I had ever seen at some place in Kansas. I started out to drive the buggy but the roads were so rough and the buggy so light that I exchanged places with my husband and I drove the wagon through.

There was one of the worst blizzards that I ever saw and we had nothing but sticks and stalks to make a fire with. My brother had two small children and they would get out and

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run around and both of them got their feet frozen and our potatoes and everything that we had in the wagon that could freeze, was frozen solid. When we started on our trip we all agreed that we would not travel on Sunday and stuck by this agreement until the last day of our travel which was Sunday. But we were anxious to get to our claims. We got there about the middle of that Sunday afternoon. It took us five weeks and three days to make our trip. When the men came in the summer there was a waving mass of green grass. But when we got there in December all we could see were red hills and rock. I wanted the men to stretch the tent and get ready for the night. They took picks and shovels and went out to explore and when they came back they were the sickest bunch I ever saw. Father told Mother that we were all going back, but she said since she had come that she was going to stay and said she had not wanted to come in the first place. My husband wanted to go back but I said we were not going back, for the last thing I had seen and heard was a bunch of people waving and saying, "You all will be back".

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The next day we got our tent stretched and things unpacked and we took some boxes and laid them down, then laid our springs down and fixed our bed and took another box for our table. We would stand up to eat and when we got tired standing we would get on our knees as the box was not very high. We burned buffalo chips. The men found out that they could go over on Dead Indian Creek and by making posts they could get the limbs and grubs for fuel. After getting some wood for us to burn the men went to Weatherford to get the things that we had shipped there. Everything had arrived all right but my brother's stove which had been broken. That was all the worse because he was sick and had arrived here with 30 cents and a wife and two children.

Christmas was getting near so one day my sister-in-law, Minnie, and I decided that we would walk to a little store and post office which went by the name of Wash. It was nine miles away. We got up early one morning and started out, leaving Mother with the three children. We wanted to get some presents for the men and treats for the children as we were expecting the men home Christmas Eve and wanted to have

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a surprise for them. On arriving at the store there was nothing in the way of presents so we bought the men a cigar apiece and the children some stick candy, got our mail and started home. Minnie's heels were blistered and we would have to stop all along for her to sit down and rest her feet and that made us late getting home and when we got there we found that Mother and the children had been scared and were crying. There wasn't a house anywhere to be seen. Mother had our supper cooked, which was some dry weather beans we had bought when we came through Weatherford, and as we were out of bread Mother mixed some flour dough and dropped some of it in with the beans and fried some biscuits. The next day Minnie and I went down into a canyon and cut a hackberry tree and dragged it in and dug a hole down in the dirt floor and put it up. This hackberry tree already had the berries on it, so we popped corn and strung it over the tree, put the cigars and candy and the childrens' old toys on the tree for there were no new ones. We wrapped the tree with a sheet and had it all ready when the men got home. One of them acted as Santa

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Claus and gave out the gifts. This was our first Christmas in the Territory and was the happiest Christmas of my life.

That spring we planted a sod crop; I went along and dropped the seed by hand and my husband came along and covered the seed with a sod plow and after that was done we were idle. Lee Royce and his family would come over and we would go over on the Washita and camp for a day or two at a time and fish, and we would cook the fish right on the bank. One time a bunch of us decided that we would go over to some lakes across the North Fork of Red River; there were twelve of us in one wagon and we were working a span of little mules and when we got out in the middle of the river the mules began to bog down. The men got out and began to prize and pull and some of the women got scared and began to scream. The men carried the children and some of the women across but I got right out in the water and waded out as the water was not more than two or three feet deep, so that I didn't get all of my dress wet and I wrung the bottom of my dress out the best I could and it soon dried. The men got the wagon and team out and we went on to the lakes and had a jolly good time.

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We lived in the tent for a while and built a barn out of cottonwood lumber. We just boxed it and stripped it and covered it with planks and stripped the cracks. We made three stalls for the horses, then at one end we fixed a place for our buggy and adjoining the buggy shed we made a little shed room for a chicken shed. Our tent was so large and the wind flopped it around so that we got afraid of it and exchanged and put our stock in it and we moved into the barn, as fixing the stalls in the tent made it more secure. I had brought a home-made carpet with me so we used it as a partition between our part of the barn and the buggy shed. The building was made out of green cottonwood lumber and when it rained and afterwards the sun came out it would work and twist and then the rain would pour in. When it rained there would not be a dry thing in the house, only what was in the trunk. While in this barn my baby son, Elmer, was born. They took a wagon sheet and threw it over the rafters then tied the ends of it to each end of my bed to keep it dry.

My father's claim joined ours and Brother's claim

joined his. We dug a large well on the line of Father's place and ours. The stock could come from both places for water and we carried water for our own use. There was not a church nor school house anywhere so the people got together and built a little school house and named it Prairie View; it later burned down.

That summer a preacher, Brother Fulton, with a little old poor team, came out there from Weatherford and started a revival. There were not many people living close so they came in covered wagons for a long ways and lots of them came to our house and stayed. I fed many a person when I didn't know where our next meal was coming from. I would set my dough in the morning and go to preaching. When I came in to cook dinner I would make the dough out into loaves and put it in pans and we would eat dinner and by that time it had risen enough to put in the oven. I would fill the stove full of cow chips, then we would go to a baptizing, for there surely were lots of people baptized, and when we came home in the evening our bread would be done and we would make coffee and water gravy and eat supper.

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My brother's health improved from the very beginning and the first Fall we were here he went down close to Weatherford to gather corn, leaving his wife and children in their tent alone. One night a storm came up and blew their tent down. His wife seeing that the ridge pole was going to break, put boxes and things in the bed around the children to hold the tent off of them and she then got into bed. After the storm was over my husband went to see about them and finding the tent he called to them. My brother's wife did not recognize my husband's voice and it was some time before she would answer. When she found out who it was she and the children came crawling out. He brought them over home and they hadn't had a bite to eat. After their tent was blown down the neighbors dug them a dugout. They surely know what hard times are, for they have made many a meal on a slice of watermelon. But they made it through and still live on their place. My brother is in good health but his wife is an invalid and has to go around in a wheeled chair.

We would go over on the river and gather wild grapes and plums, as they were the only kind of fruit we had. We

didn't have any jars and no money to buy them so I would put the plums on the stove and cook them, then run them through a colander. Then I would put them in tin pans and set them on the chicken house in the sun to dry. When one side would get dry I would take a knife and turn the plums over. When they got dry they were just like rubber. We would sack them up and when we wanted fruit we would put some of this on the stove in some water and it wouldn't be long until they would be dissolved. Then I would put in some sugar and soon there would be some real nice plum butter.

My husband got a job freighting from Weatherford. In that way we kept bread to eat. It would take him five days to make the trip. He had to ford Big Boggy Creek and the banks were steep and in rainy weather he sure did have a time climbing the slick banks. One time he was caught out in a blizzard with a load of flour. They say that flour is the coldest thing that there is in cold weather. My husband went to a house and asked to stay all night and they wouldn't let him stay, so he went to his wagon and made his bed on the sacks of

flour, but it was not long until he was about to freeze. He got up and took one of his horses and trotted it up and down the road and then he would go tie it and get the other horse and he kept this up all night. In this way he kept from freezing and he said that he believed if the man had let him stay all night both of his horses would have frozen to death.

Another time he was camped on Big Boggy Creek and just about bedtime an Indian came to the camp to warm and made like he was awfully cold. In just a short time another one came and a little later another one came. My husband had a good team and he thought that the Indians were wanting to get off with his horses sure, so he didn't sleep much that night and held his gun in his hand all night. But the Indians didn't bother him in any way and he learned later that they were having a stomp dance down the creek aways.

We lived on our claim three years, then we moved over into Washita County and lived there until nine years ago, when we moved to Elk City.

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My husband, Henry Green, died here in Elk City two months ago and it laid to rest in the Fair Lawn Cemetery.

I have a clock that my husband bought at a sale forty-three years ago. It was second hand when we got it. It was in the barn and got rained on many times but has never had one thing done to it and has never had a drop of oil put in it. I don't suppose it has missed running a whole day, all put together, and it still keeps time as good as it ever did. ~~We also have a clock shelf that my~~ husband made when we first married. He cut a walnut log and took it to a sawmill and had it sawed just like he wanted it. He made a very beautiful clock shelf and it is solid walnut

When I look back on those pioneer days with their many hardships, I can truly say that they have been the happiest days of my life. We didn't have a great variety of things to eat, but we were well and hearty and everything tasted good.