

INDEX CARDS

Openings--Cherokee Strip
Pioneer life--Oklahoma Territory
Burial customs

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

88

Field Worker's name Mary D. DorwardThis report made on (date) May 13 19371. Name Edna Robbins Gregory2. Post Office Address Tulsa, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 315g South Trenton4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 18935. Place of birth Hannibal, Missouri6. Name of Father John Gregory Place of birth _____Other information about father White

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother White

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 2.

Mary D. Dorward, Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
May 12, 1937

PRE-STATEHOOD DAYS IN INDIAN TERRITORY
Interview with Edna Gregory Robbins
315 1/2 South Trenton, Tulsa

We came to Oklahoma in '93 when the Cherokee Strip was opened, not long after I was born. Father had made the run and secured a claim near Nardin in Kay County. We had left a good home in Hannibal, Missouri, but after we got here we saw nothing but hard times for years. Father's claim was not one of the best ones. The land was virgin soil and poor at that. The crops wouldn't grow and there was no fuel. Father had to give up the idea of farming and do anything he could find to make a living. Among other things I recall his digging a well for one of the neighbors. He took care of a little Methodist church which stood across the road from our house, while Mother helped out as best she could by baking bread to sell and giving meals to some of the men.

I went to school in a little white frame building, two or three miles from our house, walking the entire distance each way every day.

We were not troubled by Indians in any way but we were troubled by gypsies a great deal.

In 1904 Father gave up the struggle on his claim and moved to Tulsa.

INDIAN BURIAL

We came to Tulsa in a wagon. Some place along the way - I don't know where - we passed a place that had a great many of what appeared to be little houses in it. We stopped and peeked into one of them and there we saw the body of an Indian sitting upright. He was dead, of course, and that was the way he had been buried. There was a cushion at his back, he was fully clothed in a buckskin suit, heavily beaded, and in each hand was a suitcase. We learned afterward that the suitcases contained his clothes and that his horses had been buried with him.. Judging from the quality of his clothes he must have been a person of importance and means, while the well preserved condition of his body indicated that he had only recently been buried.

(I am going to interview Mrs. Robbins' father who she says can give more details of early days.)