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

BELLOWS, JULIA STEELE INTERVIEW #10292

Field Worker's name Zaidee B. Bland

This report made on (date) March 22, 1938 1938

1. Name Julia Steele Bellows

2. Post Office Address Altus, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) She lives most of her time in California with her children now.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 10 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Texas.

6. Name of Father Tom Steele Place of birth Wisconsin

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Salvina Fisher Place of birth Ohio

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 5.

BELLOWS, JULIA STEELE

INTERVIEW

#10292

Zaidee B. Bland
Journalist
March 22, 1938.

Interview with Julia Steele Bellows
Altus, Oklahoma.

We came out in 1893 but did not file on land until after the dispute was settled about the title of land. We filed in November, 1896, five miles north of Blair and my husband bought a little house and moved onto the land so I never had to live in a dugout as most of the early settlers did.

We had two wood stoves, one in each room but as the wood had to be gotten from the Nation across the river we were very careful of fuel and seldom had but one fire at a time.

Mr. Bellows dug a well and I had an abundance of good water which was also unusual for the pioneer.

The first crop we planted was hailed out completely but we had three cows, some hogs and chickens so we had to get along the best we could and Mr. Bellows freighted to get extra money for supplies.

Wild cattle broke in and ate up all the second crop except the cotton but we made a bale of cotton to the acre

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and cotton was a good price so we got along pretty well.

Mr. Bellows decided he was not much of a farmer so made a contract to buy stock for Waggoner and Herring, the two biggest ranchmen in this part of the world. The first winter he bought more than a thousand head; he bought a lot of them from the Kiowas and would let the contract for them to be wintered in 100 head lots to different people. He lost a good many head that way for when a man's feed gave out he would neglect the yearlings and a lot of them died.

Mr. Bellows was gone from home a lot and that left to me the managing of the farm and the rearing of the children and sometimes I would get completely out of fuel and have to burn cotton seed or corn for a few days to keep warm.

I was more afraid of storms than anything for we did not have a cellar or dugout. I remember one of my children was three weeks old when the most awful looking cloud came up. The older children were at school so I took the smaller children and the baby up on the bed with me expecting most any moment to be blown away. Then it began to hail and the hail sounded like rocks on the roof. Mr. Bellows' nephew

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came into the house from the field. The hail made great holes in the roof so I left the children on the bed to put things under the holes to try and keep the house from being flooded. While I was doing this the nephew called and said "If you don't want this baby drowned you had better come here". I turned back to the bed to see what was the matter and from a hole in the roof a stream of water was pouring right down in that three week old baby's mouth. She would have been drowned presently, sure enough, had I not moved her.

Food.

Because Mr. Bellows was away so very much we never raised much garden and I do not remember ever having enough meat and lard to do us but Mr. Bellows came home often and would always bring such things as he thought we might need so we always had plenty. of most things Probably we lived a little better than the average settler, for at least he made enough to buy what we needed and made such frequent trips out to the railroad stations that we did not have to do without what we did not raise at home as so many of the neighbors did. Milk, butter and eggs I usually had plenty of.

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I had a lot of anxious days during high water times for fear that Mr. Bellows would get caught in the high water and drown for a lot of western ponies will not swim but when they find themselves in swimming water just flop over on their sides and float and if one happens to be riding a horse of that kind the chances of reaching safety is slim. Once when Mr. Bellows decided to come home from over in Kiowa County he had two Indian ponies with him, one a pack pony and one to ride. He had been over there buying up yearlings and it had been raining so much he was not making much headway. When he rode into Elk Creek his pony flopped over and refused to swim, but fortunately the creek was narrow and only a few yards of water was swimming and before he tackled another stream he changed ponies and rode the pack pony in home.

Only the wide quicksand rivers were very dangerous and you could usually hear the river roar from the headrises and avoid being caught, although a lot of newcomers were drowned.

In our river pasture there were a lot of wild grapes and plums that we gathered plenty of each summer. We used

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them both for pies, jelly and preserves; one can make a tasty dish from wild fruit if they know how.

Animals and Birds.

Neither animals nor birds were very plentiful on the sand. Wolves gave me some trouble with the little calves, pigs and colts; polecats caught a lot of my fowls and hawks also ate my chickens, We did not eat any wild meat to speak of, a few rabbits and quail were about all for none of my folks were much to hunt.

Church and School.

All our children went to DOT to both school and church and they had to ride for it was six miles or more from where we lived. Nothing unusual ever happened; they were just ordinary children raised in the average way for the time and place.