

Interview with Ida Fenzloff Koebrick
El Reno, Oklahoma

Interviewer - Mrs. Nora Lorrin
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Mrs. Ida (Fenzloff) Koebrick was born in Germany, September 11, 1869. Her father, Carl Fenzloff, was born in Germany, February 23, 1836, and died October 29, 1924. Her mother, Whilemina (Hein) Fenzloff, was born in Germany, about 1845. Her parents were married in Germany and came to the United States when Mrs. Koebrick was nine months old. There were six children, three born in Germany and three in America. They came to New York Harbor and went directly from there to Dubuque, Iowa. Her father was a stone mason and worked at that trade while they were living at Dubuque.

They lived at Dubuque for about five years then they moved to Charles City, Iowa, living there three years and then Mr. Fenzloff bought a farm, six miles east of Charles City, and they lived there until his death. He still did stone mason work after he moved to the farm as well as his regular farm work.

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Mrs. Koebrick was married to Fred Koebrick on March 11, 1888. Her husband at that time was a wagon maker and worked in a wagon shop at Charles City, Iowa. They came to Oklahoma in 1895, and had four children at the time; they have six children, four boys and two girls.

Mr. Koebrick had a brother living on a farm near Charles City, and he was not doing so well on it and he heard of some land in Oklahoma that could be gotten cheap. He and some other men, six in all, came down here on the train and looked the country over and bought a farm seven miles southwest of El Reno. They came back to Charles City, and Mr. Fred Koebrick's brother sold his place there, took his family in a passenger car, with his furniture, household goods, and some stock on a freight car and his brother, Mr. Fred Koebrick, came with the freight car to look after his brother's goods.

Mr. Fred Koebrick stayed with his brother two months, helping him to get settled and looking the country over. After returning home to Charles City,

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he was no longer satisfied. He liked Oklahoma so well that he wanted to come here to live. The next year they packed, sold out and came down on the train. They came to El Reno, bought two lots on South Rock Island Street and built a little two room house on it which was neatly made, being finished with weather boarding. Mr. Fred Koebrick at that time was a carpenter and he helped to build the first little Methodist Church that was built in the 900 block on Rock Island Street.

The first year they were here the weather was hot and dry and dusty. Mrs. Koebrick and the children got sick with the malaric fever and Mr. and Mrs. Koebrick lost their oldest boy the first Fall they were here. They tried to sell their house and lots and all they could get for them was an offer of \$50.00 and they would not sell for that so they remained and the longer they stayed the better conditions became, and they decided not to leave at all. Her husband got work in a tin shop, learned the plumber's trade, made

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money, and got along fine.

They only brought their clothes, bed clothes, and dishes from Iowa and bought the things they needed for their little two room house after they got here. They used wood for fuel and obtained it easily. The farmers would bring wood to town already cut in stove lengths and ready to put in the stove for \$1.00/^{per load} or at most \$1.50. They had to buy their water until they got their well dug. A Mr. Downey had a tank and he would drive to the springs at Darlington, fill his tank, and then sell water in El Reno at 10 cents a barrel and the Koebricks bought their water from him.

Their food was mostly salt meat, bread and potatoes (sweet potatoes.) At first the people here had bad luck with their potatoes and for awhile they thought that they could not raise Irish potatoes here. They had gotten in some seed potatoes from Idaho and they did not do well here. It was some time before they found that it was not the country that was wrong but the seed potatoes.

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There were three grocery stores when they came to El Reno. There was the 'Pagle Brothers' Grocery Store and these Pagle brothers were from the Koebricks' home town, Charles City, Iowa; Huffman's Grocery and Mr. Frank Waldo's Store.

Mr. and Mrs. Koebrick thought that when they came to Okiahoma, the Indians would be everywhere but they were not. Mrs. Koebrick saw her first Indians at the early day school buildings, over on the 600 block on South Rock Island Street, where a lecture was being given by Indians and white people. There were about fifty Indians there, most of them boys and girls from Darlington and from the Caddo School and they were in uniform, the girls having on dresses alike that were made of some blue and white cotton material, blue with white pin stripes. Three of the Indians spoke in their own tongue and were dressed in full Indian regalia. The Indian boys wore buck skin pants fringed along the side, large feathered head dresses and beaded moccasins and blankets and they called those who talked "Chiefs."

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The lecture had something to do with school but she could not tell much about it. The lecture lasted about an hour or little better. The white teachers also talked. There was one old Indian who did not say anything just sat back and watched interestedly.

The Koebricks used to drive out to the Concho School, which was called Caddo Springs then. They attended the Methodist Church.

They used to gather wild grapes and sand plums and get themselves eaten up with chiggers. There were no chiggers where they came from and it was quite awhile before they knew what chiggers were and what to do for them. At first people told them to bathe in salt water but Mrs. Koebrick found that rubbing a little butter on each bite stopped the itching more quickly. They had a scratchy time for a while.

They used to go out to Darlington and have picnics. A crowd would get together and go out there and serve watermelon, cantaloupe, and ice cream. They used to cut cantaloupes in half and fill them with

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ice cream and serve them that way.

There was a smallpox epidemic in 1889, but not a very bad one as the attacks were light and a good many people had it but no one died with it.

When the Koebricks first came, this town of El Reno was almost nothing and it has grown so gradually that they could hardly notice the growth, but grow it did.

The Koebricks have made several trips back to their old home at Charles City, Iowa, but each time it seems more out of date and not nearly so new and up-to-date as El Reno is and she is always glad to get back to El Reno.