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

Field Worker's name Ruth Kerbo

Report made on (date) June 12 1937

Name Mrs. Lottie B. Laminack

Post Office Address Mangum, Oklahoma, R. 2

Residence address (or location) Twelve miles southwest of Mangum

DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 17 Year 1876

Place of birth Doulin, Texas

Name of Father C.W. McClung Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Fannie Carmack Place of birth Texas

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.

Ruth Kerbo
Field Worker
June 12, 1937

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Interview with Mrs. Lottie B. Laminack.
R.# 2. Mangum, Oklahoma.
Father-C. W. McGiung
Mother-Fannie Carmack

My husband and I came to Greer County in 1894. We came here for my health. We were living in Erath County, Texas, at that time and after my health got so bad, we started traveling. We came in a covered wagon and by the time we arrived here I was feeling much better. I weighed less than one hundred pounds. Anybody wouldn't believe it to look at me now as I weigh about one hundred and fifty pounds.

Anyway we did not have anything but our wagon and team and a camping outfit. We came here and went in a hole in the ground and had to scratch out. Our dugout was made like a cellar ^{and} was, awfully dark, but we couldn't do any better.

The fleas nearly ate us up, although we tried every means we could think of to get rid of them, but did not have much luck. We could sprinkle the floor with salt and that kept them down very well. But we did not have the money to buy the things we needed to keep them out. We could hardly sleep for

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them at night, and they would get on our bodies about the waistline, so we would take a rag and dip it in kerosene oil and rub our bodies with it. This kept them off of us while we slept. These fleas came from the prairie dogs in the country. The prairie dogs were so very numerous, they would destroy our crop as fast as it came up. We made traps of different types to catch them. It was awfully hard to shoot them—they were so active, they would scamper off before anyone could take aim and shoot. One kind of trap was a narrow board with a fish hook nailed to it near one end. We would take these traps and put them down into the prairie dog hole and when he ran down in there he would hang himself on the fish hook.

Finally after we made a crop or two, my husband and my father bought a machine to kill them with. An agent came by our place with the machine and said he would take \$10.00 for it. This machine had a container that held carbon and a long hose suspended from the can and a pump fastened to it somehow so the carbon gas

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could be pumped into the prairie dog hole. After the gas was pumped in there, the hole was covered up and the dogs that were in there died. We called this machine our "dog killer."

This land produced hardly anything the first year it was so awfully dry. Really we starved out. My husband left me there at the dugout and went over near Russell to work for a man with his crop to get some money to buy food. I had but one dress. We couldn't leave as we had nothing to leave on.

Finally one day while I was alone in the dugout, Bill Racy from the ZV Ranch came by and said they needed a cook over at the ranhh, also needed another hand to help on the range and asked if my husband and I would work. They offered me \$7.50 a month and my husband \$15.00 a month. We readily accepted and went to work the next day.

We just left our claim and stayed over at the ranch for eighteen months. The cowboys were very agreeable and nice to cook for and it wasn't such hard work either. The boys never got rough or used profanity in my presence.

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I remember the only time any of the boys got out of his place was when one of them got drunk. He was out at the water tank where the boys washed for dinner. He was staggering around so much, Nash Racy, boss at the Ranch, told him to stay out at the barn until he could act like a gentleman.

We filed on this place here where old Blake postoffice used to be. One room of this house was the first house I ever lived in in Greer County.

We saved up a little money while we were working for the ZV outfit and when we went back to our cabin we built a half dugout with two windows; it had a dirt floor. This was so much nicer than the one we lived in, but it still was hard to keep warm in it.

Wood was scarce anyway.

We took some old net wire and wove willow sticks in the meshes of the wire and made our chicken house. This did not keep them dry, but kept the wolves from getting them at night. I have seen wolves come up within twenty or thirty feet of the dugout and grab an old hen that probably had a bunch of little chickens and get away with her and me hollering and waving at

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Once I shot at one with our old muzzle loading gun and the thing kicked me over so I did not try to shoot at them any more. The wolves got an old hen that I had setting on forty chicken just before the eggs were ready to hatch.

It was impossible to sell butter and eggs. I took hens to Guanah and sold them for \$1.00 a dozen. We sold some corn for fifty cents a bushel to the ZV ranch when we started to work for them.

We used water out of the tanks in the hills, and used mesquite roots.

The store and postoffice here at old Blake was across the road from our place. Mr. Kildow operated it first. It changed hands a number of times before it finally burned, and the postoffice moved to Russell. When it was finally discontinued.

I have seen many hardships here in this country. I have seen the time that I would have left if I had. But I still have my place, have improved it. After all it was worth my efforts.