

LEE, MARY C.

INTERVIEW.

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Cherokee Strip
Enid

Field Worker, Merrill A. Nelson
April 23, 1937.

Interview with: Mrs. Mary C. Lee
514 W. Maple, Enid, Okla.

Born October 3, 1838, Brookfield,
Trumbull County, Ohio.

Father David Snyder, born in Penn.

Mother Mary Ann Comes, born in
Trumbull County, Ohio.

MARY C. LEE'S STORY

(Mrs. Lee does not think the Oklahoma Pioneers had many hardships to go through, either because she arrived later than some or it may be because she was so well taken care of),

I was born in Trumbull County, Brookfield Township, ninety-eight years ago. When I was nine years old my parents moved to North Bloomfield, Ohio, where they owned a six hundred and forty acre tract of land. There were three brothers and one sister that I remember. My parents buried three other children. The oldest of my brothers was Cyrus, then came Byron, and I was the next child, then Todd and Polina were younger.

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I finished my teachers' course there in North
Bloomington and began to teach. While in Ohio I
attended Hiram College of which James A. Garfield,
who later was President of the United States, was
president. I was well acquainted with him and he called
me by my first name, which is Mary.

One day after the Civil War he came to
dedicate a soldiers' monument. This was at Farmington,
Ohio, where I lived after I married at the age of
twenty-six. He recognized me, and said, "Mollie
(Mary) I thought you were dead." "No," I replied,
"I am very much alive." The reason for his statement
was that a sister-in-law by the same name as mine
had died and I suppose he saw the notice in the papers.
He was a very friendly man.

About sixty-six years ago we moved to Nebraska,
and we were the first settlers in our section, which
was two miles east of Shelton. My father found that
oxen were cheaper to feed than horses, so he bought a

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pair of big horned Texas oxen. One time he drove to Shelton. The animals were excellent walkers, but a mile from home, since it was about feeding time they started to run. He whipped them till he broke the whip, and then used my umbrella and broke that. After that he could not hold them, and they ran over the prairie straight for the barn. It was a dangerous ride but as no one was hurt, it was a rather funny adventure too.

My daughter, Mrs. W. O. Crowwell, was born in Ohio, and her husband was one of the early settlers in the Cherokee Strip.

About forty years ago we came to Oklahoma. We were not here at the opening of the Strip but arrived about one year after that. After what I had experienced in Nebraska, I thought there was not much pioneering to life in Oklahoma.

We had about the same entertainments we have today. The first year I was here, there was a moving picture show on the south side of the square.

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I was much impressed with this first show, they showed large draft horses, which were new to me, but of course are common now.

The first auto I saw was purchased by a man named Goltry. I do not recall the year, but it cost him five or six hundred dollars, and was a two seated affair. He did not like it and went back to a horse and buggy.

When we first came here, we lived on East Hill on that side of town, but later we moved over here on West Maple. We had the entire block (now covered with fine homes) and I had a large orchard on the place and strawberries, cherries, plums, apricots, black berries, goose berries and peaches.

About 1896 or 1897 Ringling Brothers had a circus here. They took about \$300,000 out of the town, or so it was reported.

One of the ways I helped the city was by starting the Carnegie library. It grew out of the Enid Study club. We rented a small room at first but

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we outgrew one place. He began this work about 1896. Mr. Eastman, receiver of the land office, got the government to have Mr. Carnegie make a Library grant to the city.

I was worthy matron of the Eastern Star Lodge for three years, refusing to serve when asked to hold the office again. I knew many of the pioneers, such as Mrs. Truitt, and Mrs. Weatherly, who live west of the city on a farm. Other prominent families were the Prantzes, the Murphys, and a Mr. Kerns who was married here.

Mr. A. O. Cromwell has two children, who are my grandchildren. They are Lee Cromwell, aged thirty-nine, and Mary Cromwell, aged thirty-seven, and I also have two great-grandchildren, Meredith Cromwell, and Judith Cromwell.