

TURNEY, ROSE MELISSIA.

INTERVIEW

9157

395

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

Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan

This report made on (date) October 12 1937

1. Name Rose Melissia Turney

2. Post Office Address Enid, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1427 East Main Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 13 Year 1857

5. Place of birth Deerfield, Chickasaw County, Iowa.

6. Name of Father Thomas Newell Bobb. Place of birth Indiana.

7. Name of Mother Caroline Isabell Place of birth Ohio

Stephenson
 Other information about mother House wife.

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 6.

Elizabeth L. Duncan
Journalist
October 12, 1938

Interview with Rose Melissia Turney
1427 E. Main Street, Enid, Oklahoma.

Rose Melissia Turney was born in Deerfield, Chickasaw County, Iowa, June 13, 1857.

Her mother was left with four children while her father was fighting on the Union side. He served in the Army four years.

In 1863, the people in her home community got word that the Indians from Minnesota were on the war path and headed that way, and they were warned to get to a safe place where they would be guarded by what men were left. There was a man on horseback warning all to have what they could take with them ready for leaving at a minute's notice. It would take at least three hours to go to the meeting place as they would have to go by wagon and oxen. There was a small island across the Wapsipinnick River where ^a family had built a large log house. This house was used as a refuge, and the small island was surrounded on all sides by water. Her mother was all nerves when the warning was given. She had the children

all dressed and they even slept with their shoes on so they could go the minute the wagon drove up and all night her mother sat up while the children slept. The following morning one of the men said he was going to Howard which was a distance of nine miles. It took him three hours to go. He came back and told them the soldiers had gotten the ^{Indians} / quieted down. What a relief it was as the children were permitted to go to play again without fear.

When she was ten, her father packed all of their belongings into three covered wagons and started out for Kansas to take a homestead. They were on the way twenty-one days. They arrived at Greenwood County, Kansas, close to Eureka. They hauled all their flour and lumber from Humboldt. After her father was settled and began his farming, arrangements were made for schooling the children. At seventeen, Rose was ready to teach school but her father would not let her teach and she was very disappointed.

In 1875, there were many grasshoppers. It was pitiful for they would light on the crops and by night the crop would be stripped, even the flowers. There were two years that the hoppers took the crops.

On February 21, 1883, Rose was married to Nelson E. Turnney.

After their marriage, they moved to Neil where they lived for three years, then moved on his father's place and remained for two years.

Nelson came down into the Strip quite a number of times to hunt, little thinking that this land would be opened to homesteaders. In 1893, Nelson heard that the Strip was to open and they went down through the Cheyenne and Arapaho country so they could make the run from the South. They came down two weeks before the opening and registered at Black Bear, and Nelson had no trouble in registering.

On September 16, 1893, at twelve noon the signal was given and Nelson made the run on horseback. He had another fellow to drive his covered wagon while he came ahead to homestead. It took him an hour to make the run. He staked the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of 27-24-4, Grant County. As soon as he had dug a few spades of sod and made a showing that some one had staked the claim, he then started out to find the covered wagon. He found it at ten o'clock and they came back to the homestead to stay that night.

The next morning, Nelson started out for Enid to file. He was down there two weeks but was lucky and got to file within a week as a fellow by the name of Bob whom he knew in Kansas happened to run into him while he was filing and Bob suggested to Nelson that he come and get in ahead of him so he could file sooner as Nelson had to get back to the homestead as soon as possible because he had left the horses and other things.

After coming back to the homestead, he asked one of the neighbors to look after his things while he went back up into Kansas where he stayed four weeks. One day Nelson and Rose went in to Neil to get some supplies and Nelson met his father who did not recognize him for he had grown a beard and it was quite a joke on his father, Nelson thought.

Nelson came back and forth from Kansas to his claim and finally on February 22, three families from Neil came down into the Strip. They were on the road eight days. Nelson and Rose brought two cows and six horses with them, shipped a carload of furniture, seed corn, wheat, maize and farming implements. On the way down, the family cooked their meals out of doors and ate out except one day. The last night they camped out was at Salt Fork. The next day they arrived

at their home. They put up a tent and lived in this for a month while the men built a large sod house. After building the house, Nelson took trees and made posts to make shelter for the horses. He put the posts real close together and the carpets that Rose had brought down with her he tacked up against the posts so as to keep the cold wind from blowing through the cracks. They had to haul water until April, then Nelson dug a well, also a large cave.

That spring they broke forty acres of sod and planted corn, but the corn did not make as it burned up. The second year he broke more sod and planted corn and wheat and milo maize. The corn and maize did not make on account of the hot dry weather. In 1896, the corn and wheat made good, also the following year, 1897.

The post office where the homesteaders got their mail was Highland. It was three miles from the Turney place.

Their first school was built in August of 1894. It was a large dugout. The second year they built a one-room sod house. The third year they built a frame house and the sod house was given to the church.

In 1909, Nelson sold all of his stock and went out West for six months. They spent two months in Seattle taking in

the fair. they came back and settled down in Hunter for a year, then they moved to Wichita, Kansas, lived there eight years, and returned to Hunter to stay a year when they moved to 1427 North Main Street, Enid. Mrs. Turney still lives in Enid by herself.