

WALDO, CLARA D. (Barnett)

INTERVIEW

#8016

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Form A-(S-149)
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WALDO, CLARA D. BARNETT. INTERVIEW.
BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS, PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin

This report made on (date) July 26, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Clara D. (Barnett) Waldo.
2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.
3. Residence address (or location) 1001 South Rock Island.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 5 Year 1866.
5. Place of birth La Fayette County, Missouri.

6. Name of Father Edwin Ryland Barnett Place of birth Kentucky.

Other information about father Died January, 1899.

7. Name of Mother Susan (Cody) Barnett Place of birth Ireland.

Other information about mother Died in April, 1905

Father and mother both buried in cemetery near Arkansas City,
Kansas.

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 _____

Nora Lorrin,
Interviewer.
July 20, 1937.

An Interview With Mrs. Clara D. Waldo,
1001 South Rock Island, El Reno, Okla.

Mrs. Clara D. (Barnett) Waldo was born in LaFayette County, Missouri, July 5, 1866.

Her father, Edwin Ryland Barnett, was born in Kentucky, about 1835, and died in January, 1899.

Her mother, Susan (Cody) Barnett, was born in Ireland, in 1835. She crossed to this country from Ireland twice. She moved with her mother, the present Mrs. Clara D. Waldo's grandmother, to California, in 1849. Mrs. Waldo's grandmother died out in California, leaving her mother without a living relative. Her mother married Mr. Edwin Ryland Barnett when she was twenty years of age. Mrs. Barnett died in April, 1905.

Mrs. Waldo came to Arkansas City from Missouri in 1885, and was married to Mr. Frank Waldo, in 1886.

When the preparations were being made for the opening of Oklahoma to settlement, she states that everybody was just wild to come. By the time the Waldos were ready to come to Oklahoma, they had three children, two boys and a girl. Later they had another girl, who only lived to be seventeen months old.

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When they were getting ready to come to Oklahoma they traded their furniture to a furniture dealer in Arkansas City for some new furniture that had never been unpacked, all they had to do was to have it shipped on to Oklahoma. Mr. Waldo made the run and got a lot in Guthrie. He was in Guthrie for several months and then he sold his lot.

The Waldos came to Oklahoma City on the Sante Fe Railroad and came to El Reno, on the Old Choctaw Railroad.

They have been in business here most of the time since they came; they usually sold feed and coal, but they also have had a grocery store.

The Waldo children went to the "Central Ward School", as it was called then. Mrs. Waldo's children and her five grand children have gone to school to Miss Etta Dale.

Except for short periods, they have been in El Reno ever since 1892, forty-five years ago last May. The Waldos sold their home in El Reno and went to Pilot Point, Texas, in 1899, but only stayed there a few months, then returned to El Reno and purchased another home in the same ward.

The Indians at Concho often traded at their store, they would usually have an order listed as to just what was

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allowed them, and the Government would see that it was paid for. She says that if you gave credit to an Indian and he took a notion not to pay you could not get it from him. For some reason you were not allowed to even dun them when they were on the Government Reservation; you had to catch them when they were off the Reservation in order to dun them. She does not know exactly why. She used to know a Mr. Kingsley, an Indian, an educated one, that she says was very nice; he had some kind of a job at Concho. She also remembers an Indian Interpreter by the name of Robert Burns, who used to be at Darlington for a good many years and he often traded at their store.

Often the Indians would come into the store and sit on the floor, squatting around with their backs to the counter. Most of them could not talk English.

One day there was a bunch of them sitting in their store and another Indian came in and began talking to them. She could see that they were all stirred up about something, talking excitedly in their own tongue. She says it sounded more like grunting than anything else and not quite that either. It went on for quite a bit and she got curious

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about it and so she asked one of the squaws who could talk a little English what was the matter and why they were all so excited. The squaw told her that a dog had just been run over and killed in the street. Mrs. Waldo wondered why they were making such a fuss over a dead dog and so she questioned the squaw again. The squaw said, "M-e w-a-n-t i-t". Mrs. Waldo asked "What do you want of a dead dog"? The squaw answered, "M-e e-a-t, H-e g-o-od, e-a-t d-o-g". The Indians got the dead dog all right, she saw them throw it upon their wagon and drive away.

She says that Indians are not at all far sighted, they will buy extravagantly as long as they have any money at all or can get any credit. Sometimes they will even sacrifice their homes. They extended credit to a family by the name of Eagle Nest, until in order to get their pay for the groceries and other supplies, they were compelled to foreclose a mortgage they held on their home farm. Mrs. Waldo was sorry for the Indian woman so she got her son, Neal, to take it over and he gave the Indian woman back the house and the seven acres on which it was located.

Mrs. Waldo said the Indian woman was very grateful she would come up to her and pat her arm and head and say, "You Good", she was so glad that she didn't have to lose her home.

Mrs. Waldo said that the country and the town were pretty barren when they came here but they soon began planting trees, mostly Locusts, because they are drouth resisting, and it wasn't long until there were trees all over town.

There were swimming pools around El Reno, where the young folks went to swim, one of them was down along the Rock Island Railroad.

They used to attend the band concerts held at Fort Reno, and when a girl had a beau out at the Fort she was considered especially favored.

Mrs. Waldo mentioned the moving of the big "Caddo" Hotel from Reno City to El Reno and states that the Anstine Hotel, old part of the present building, also moved here from Reno City.

Mr. N. B. Waldo, owner of the Feed Mill and Coal Company, 700 South Gresham, is one of Mrs. Waldo's sons and he was two years old when they came here.

Mrs. Waldo has forded the South Canadian River several times in a buggy and has also crossed the river on a ferry at the ^{Street} 39th / Crossing, at Oklahoma City. In 1901, before the Kiowa and Commanche Country ^{was} opened to settlement, the people in El Reno were warned to lay in an extra supply of food stuffs; they took the advice and managed to hold out all right.

Mrs. Waldo said that her house was full of people all the time it was going on. One night there were 25 relatives, from Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma. The people slept on the ground all over town, also in the churches. Her husband was traveling at that time for one of the mills.

Mrs. Waldo has a picture of Robert E. Lee that her father left to her. Her father was a Confederate soldier and he sold these pictures to help pay for a monument; she does not know what monument it was. About the only relic of their early days, that they have left, is a tin match box that her husband bought before they were married. Mr. and Mrs. Waldo's first home in El Reno was located on what is now the 600 block, South Choctaw Avenue, where the Etta Dale junior high school now stands. This house was torn down when they built the Etta Dale junior high school and moved just across the street and turned into the "N. Y. A"

building and it was dedicated this spring, March 13th, 1937, by Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Mrs. Waldo says, "We had a mighty good well of water on that place and good water was scarce". Friends suggested that they sell the water, but they never did.

Mrs. Waldo says there was considerable game in the early days, especially quail and prairie chickens, and there was no law against killing all you wanted to.

They had fun going fishing, they would often go and camp out two or three days at a time and the place they usually went to was the Swartz place, located two or three miles east of El Reno. They were friends of the Swartz family, that was the reason they chose that particular place. They caught lots of channel cat out there and there was always good fishing until they changed the course of the river bed, after that it spoiled the fishing for some reason.

The Swartz family lived in a sod house, when they, the Waldos, went out there to fish.