

WILSON, ANDREW J. (MRS.) INTERVIEW #4507

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Augusta H. Custer,  
Field Worker.  
June 14, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Andrew J. Wilson,  
Geary, Oklahoma.

I was born in Scott County, Illinois, August 25, 1856. My childhood was spent in Illinois on a farm with my parents. I and my husband moved to Kansas where he filed on an eighty acre homestead. In 1892 we moved to Blaine County; of course, this part of the state was not known as Blaine County at that time.

There were eighty acres of good land about twelve miles west of where Geary is today and, as that was all the land Mr. Wilson was allowed, he filed on it when he could. This land was covered with black jack timber; he and the boys cleared the trees and cut them into wood which Mr. Wilson hauled to El Reno. They sold for \$1.25 and sometimes \$1.50 per load; with this money he bought the supplies which the family needed most. It was thirty-eight miles to El Reno.

It required two days for him to haul a load of wood and return. By this time the children would have

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another load ready and away he would go again. Groceries and clothing were much cheaper in those days than now; then we could get along on less than families of today.

The girls never had more than two dresses; made of gingham because it wore and washed better than calico. The two boys had three shirts and the extra shirt was worn by either. They never both had a clean shirt to put on at the same time.

The first crops raised on the sod were corn and broom corn; later, they raised wheat and had their flour and corn meal ground at the mill.

Wild fruit and game.

There were plenty of wild grapes along the river. Wild sand cherries, sand plums, and tree plums were abundant. Quail were common; there were deer and antelope, also. In fact, we never lacked for wild meat.

Indians.

We were never afraid of the Indians here in Oklahoma. The only way they ever bothered was to want to

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borrow or barter for things which we did not care to let them have. They would come and stay for hours, saying very little. There is an Indian cemetery on American Horse's place about three miles west of our old place.

#### Our Home.

Mr. Wilson cut logs and built one room about 14 x 16 feet; he allowed for a six foot ceiling, then put another row of logs around the walls, and with a pitch roof of slabs this made an attic high enough for the children to sleep in.

I brought my stove from Kansas and I did not have to cook on a fireplace as some of the other settlers did. I had few dishes and very little furniture. But none of my neighbors had much more and some had less than I, so this did not bother me.

The men dug a well and we had water near the house; we drew the water from the well with a rope and bucket.

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## Indians in Kansas.

I remember well when some Apache Indians came into a settlement in Clay County. The chief killed the son of the owner of Ward and his eldest son, crippled his younger boy, carried off Mrs. Ward and a young woman who was teaching school; her name was White. Miss White had a sweetheart who made every effort possible to get the women back, but it was fifteen years later that he got in touch with Miss White and they were married. The women's hands were scarred from being burned. The women told that when their hands were cold and they would hold them to the fire for warmth, the Indians would catch hold of their arms and burn their fingers in the fire.

Another woman was taken from her home by the Indians. When the flooded river and the settlers could not follow. Three days later while the tribe was asleep Mrs. Chesser built a campfire which attracted the settlers, and she escaped.

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### Fords and Crossings.

There was an old cattle trail and crossing, or ford, about fourteen miles west of the settlement, about five miles from the place called Bent's Crossing. It was named for an Indian who lived near the crossing. This was across the North Canadian River. Down the river about two miles was another ford named Hawkins' Crossing. The river was very treacherous and there were few places where the trucks and wagons could pass, which made the crossing dangerous.

### Entertainment, Religious Service and Schools.

The parties were held in the homes of the settlers. The neighbors would gather and play games. Later, when the school house was built, the parties were sometimes held in the school house. Church was also held in the school house. One of the settlers who felt that he had a calling to preach would assume the responsibility of occupying the pulpit and would conduct services without

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pay. There was little attention paid to denominations in those days.

School was held about three months in the year and the teacher was paid by subscription.