

CARROL, MATTIE.

INTERVIEW

8867,

150

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
CARROL, MATTIE (MRS.) INTERVIEW.

8867.

Field Worker's name Anna R. Barry

This report made on (date) October 15, 1937. 1937

1. Name Mrs. Mattie Carrol. (colored).

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 116 North Grand Avenue.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 26 Year 1871.

5. Place of birth Nashville, Tennessee.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father Father died when she was small.

7. Name of Mother Beth Glover. Place of birth Tennessee.

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 _____.

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Anna R. Barry,
Journalist,
October 15, 1937.

An Interview With Mattie Carrol,
(Colored). El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mattie (Glover) Carrol was born in a little log hut about fifteen miles northeast of the city of Nashville, Tennessee, on May 26, 1871. She does not remember her father as he died when she was quite small. In the Glover family there were three children, two girls and one boy. About 1880 this family moved to Topeka, Kansas, where Mattie's mother worked by the day to support her family. In 1891, Mattie, her mother and sister came to Oklahoma and the mother filed on a homestead in Blaine County at the Cheyenne and Arapaho opening, April 19, 1892.

In 1898 Mattie and her husband, John Carrol, came to El Reno by rail on Easter Sunday. When she first came to El Reno, all the land west of the site of the present court house was just bald prairie; John Carrol often went hunting on this land which today is the west side of El Reno. Game was still plentiful when John and Mattie came to Canadian County and John often brought home

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quail, rabbits, prairie chicken and opossum.

One of their neighbors had never eaten 'possum and said that people might just as well eat a cat as a 'possum. This neighbor happened to be at their house one morning when Mattie was preparing to bake a 'possum. After dressing the 'possum, Mattie boiled it about forty-five minutes in salt water so as to take out the wild taste, then putting it into a baking dish, she sprinkled it with salt and pepper and poured meat grease over it and put sweet potatoes around it, then put it in the oven to bake. Mattie was then called next door to a sick neighbor and to her surprise when she came home the 'possum was all gone except one foreleg and her friend told Mattie that at first she had just taken a bite to see how the 'possum tasted and had kept on eating until she guessed she had eaten more than her share. Mattie says, "Anyone that doesn't like 'possum has never eaten one that has been cooked right".

All her life, Mattie has worked hard and has gone without things; one time in her life she was lucky though. This was at the huge drawing for farms held in El Reno in 1901.

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These farms were in the Kiowa- Comanche country southwest of El Reno and Mattie drew eighty acres of land near Apache.

This drawing was conducted at the old Irving School and land-seekers flocked into El Reno from all directions; sleeping places were at a premium and food expensive. This drawing was held on August 6; it was a very warm day and as people stood in line waiting for the lucky numbers to be called, water was sold for 5 cents a cup.

John and Mattie moved onto their eighty acres of land near Apache and built a little frame house, eighteen by twenty-four feet. Mattie worked hard; she would help her husband milk their five cows, go to the field and plow or harrow and sometimes she would help to run the binder and then she would dash to the house at eleven thirty and have a nice meal ready for her husband at noon. She said, "I have even oiled the windmill on a winter day".

John Carrol was born in Virginia but when he was about twelve years old, ran away from home. Years later, his parents came to Oklahoma and settled in El Reno. All these years John had not seen his parents but after he and Mattie

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moved to their farm near Apache he heard that his parents were living in El Reno so on December 22nd, 1905, he and Mattie decided to go to El Reno to try to find John's parents. When they reached El Reno, John's father came walking out of the court house and a friend of John's stopped the father and introduced John as a stranger. John's father talked to John for a few minutes until finally the friend asked John's father if he did not recognize his own son and John and his father both stood still for about ten minutes, first laughing, then crying. John's parents lived only about two years after he found them.

In 1910, John Carrol died and Mattie sold her farm near Apache and moved back to El Reno, bought two lots at 116 North Grand Avenue and built a four room house in which she still lives.