

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

285

CLAY, T. P. (MRS.) INTERVIEW. 8066

Field Worker's name Eunice M. Mayer

This report made on (date) July 19, 1937

1. Name Mrs. T. P. Clay

2. Post Office Address Mangum, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 _____.

CLAY, T. P. (MRS.) INTERVIEW. 8066

Eunice M. Mayer
July 19, 1937

Interview with Mrs. T. P. Clay
Mangum, Oklahoma

Mrs. T. P. Clay of Mangum, wife of the late Judge Clay, veteran jurist of Western Oklahoma, emigrated to Greer County with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Dodson, in 1889.

The trip from a community near Gainesville in Coryell County, Texas, was made in a covered wagon and buggy. Members of the family, in addition to Mrs. Clay, were her brothers, Marion and Obie, and her sister, Laredo. Another sister, Mrs. C. H. Northcutt, had come to this section in 1888.

After arriving in the new country the family settled on a tract on Elm River, north of Mangum, where they remained three years.

Mr. Dodson then moved to Mangum to serve as a partner in the firm of Edwards and Duke, dry goods merchants. This establishment was located on the north side of the square.

Later, Mr. Dodson entered a grocery business. After several months, he purchased an interest in the

-2-

firm of Johnson and Gilliland, which was located on the south side of the square.

Judge T. P. Clay, husband of Mrs. Clay, had come to this section in 1889, from Georgia.

During her first years in the county prior to her marriage Mrs. Clay taught school in the frame building located on the site of the Madison building.

Before her marriage to Judge Clay, Mrs. Clay also was employed as clerk in the dry goods firm of her father for five years. Customers of the store sometimes traveled as far as sixty miles to do their trading. They bought goods in large quantities, their bills sometimes amounting to a hundred dollars.

Cattlemen who lived far from any community made trading trips to Mangum at least twice a year. Wives of cattlemen bought domestic goods by the bolt at the sum of five cents a yard.

W. K. Clay, father of Judge Clay, planted some of the first cotton grown in this section on a farm north of Mangum. Members of the family were curious about the experiment. The girls hoped they would return from

-3-

school in time to gather the cotton. Although Judge Clay planted only a small patch of cotton, he was convinced cotton would grow in this section. After emigrating to Greer County in 1889, Judge Clay practiced law here until 1896, when he was elected probate judge.

Amusements of early settlers were parties and picnics, especially mountain picnics. Men and boys enjoyed taking their rifles to the mountain picnics for squirrel hunting. Dances were a popular amusement, also.

In the nineties Mangum was a frontier community with only a few shacks comprising the business section. The post office was located on the west side of the square.

Young men of the community enjoyed hunting antelope, deer, and wild turkey.

Sandstorms of the early days were even more severe than today. Following a series of devastating sandstorms in the nineties, many settlers left Mangum never to return.

Trees were very scarce in this section in the early days. It was prairie land covered with mesquite and sage brush. Each settler brought his milk stock with him to the new section.

-4-

Delicious watermelons were grown here in the early days.

There was no ice here then, and fruit was hauled from Quanah, Texas.

A piano which was brought to Mangum by Mrs. Pearce, a music teacher in the nineties, is now in the living room of Mrs. Clay's home. The piano was purchased by M. H. Dodson, and later acquired by Mrs. Clay.