

MORGAN, LYDIA.

INTERVIEW

10375

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

#10375

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Field Worker's name Ethel Mae Yates

This report made on (date) March 29, 193 8

1. Name Lydia Morgan

2. Post Office Address Elk City, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 15 Year 1866

5. Place of birth Chickasaw Nation.

6. Name of Father James Samuel Bagby Place of birth Gainesville.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Martha Stevens Place of birth Arkansas.

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 6.

An Interview with Mrs. Lydia Morgan, Elk City.

By - Ethel Mae Yates, Investigator.

March 29, 1938.

My parents were James Samuel Bagby and Martha Bagby. They, with five other families, mostly kinfolk, came from Texas to the Indian Territory in 1889. There were six covered wagons, all working oxen. Besides the ox team Father and Mother brought seven cows.

Father made the Run but got no claim, so they settled in the Chickasaw Nation, the post office was Chickasha. He made a dugout with a fireplace - dug holes in the end of it. It had no windows and a piece of duck for a door and a dirt floor. The bedsteads were bunks made out of poles and the table was made out of cottonwood planks. Mother cooked on the fireplace in the old skillet and lid.

Father got a job working on a ranch for a Mr. Gipson. He got \$15.00 per month and cows to milk.

There was lots of game and wild varmints. The mountain lions were bad to carry off the young calves and one got in our dugout one night and my grandmother, Jane Stevens, hit it in the head with the fire poker. By that time Father was awake and finished killing it with a shotgun.

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I was born in this dugout in 1896. Father worked on this ranch until 1897 at which time he filed on a claim eight miles east of Hammon in Roger Mills County. We moved in covered wagons and still worked the oxen. We camped in the wagons until Father could make us a dugout. He dug down in the ground and covered the dugout with logs and dirt and dug a fireplace back in the dirt, then ran the chimney on up with sod. Mother still had to cook on the fireplace. Our dugout had no windows but had a cottonwood shutter for a door to keep the Indians and varmints out. We had to go down dirt steps to get in the dugout and lived on a dirt floor. Our beds were bunks made out of poles and we still used our cottonwood table. Our eats a great deal of the time were sorghum and cornbread but sometimes we would have wild turkey or beef. We drank water right out of the Washita River and got wood to burn off of its banks.

Father broke out some sod with his oxen and planted a corn crop by hand. The corn made good but there wasn't any market for it.

There wasn't any post office near us when we first came

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there and Father had to go to Weatherford to get our mail and all of our supplies. We lived near an Indian camp and the Indians would come over and visit with us and would eat right out of the pots and pans with their hands. Father taught some of them how to plow with his oxen.

In 1899 the whites and Indians came near having war. Mr. Breeding, a rancher, and his partner had some calves stray away and the Indians got them and tied one of them up with lariat rope. Mr. Breeding and the other man got the loose calves and started to get the one that was tied up and the Indians told them to take the calf but to leave the rope. They got into a squabble and shot the Indian and when they did that the Indians went on the warpath and killed Mr. Breeding and the squaws poured some kind of oil on him and burned him up. It was said that he had some money on him, but there was no trace of silver to be found after he was burned. The whites were trying to get the Indian that shot Mr. Breeding to mob him but the law got hold of him and put him in my Uncle George Stevens' dugout until the soldiers could get there. This happened eight miles east of Hammon

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on Panther Creek right close to us. Big Bear, the Chief, said that they wouldn't have bothered anyone if they had been left alone. I have seen the spot many times where Mr. Breeding was burned. I have even played on it and the grass had never grown back when we left there.

We went to Samsville School which was two miles distant and was a one room house made out of cottonwood logs with split cottonwood logs for seats and the teacher's desk was a little home-made table made out of cottonwood planks. We had to walk and go across pastures for there were no roads, just cow trails. The cattle and coyotes would chase us and once the coyotes came near catching my cousin, Allen Stevens, on the way to school. We would have had to go barefoot but the Indians traded us moccasins for vegetables, so we had moccasins and cotton check dresses.

There was an Indian burial ground not far from us and when an Indian died they would dig a hole in the ground and put the body in it and cover it up. They did not put the dead in a box of any kind.

Three years after we came here, Homer Gipson came here and put in a ranch adjoining us and hired Father to work for

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him. He was a son of the Mr. Gipson that Father had worked for in the Chickasaw Nation. He paid Father \$30.00 per month and he also had time to work some at home.

We lived in this dugout five years, then Father built a two-room log house and covered it with logs, brush and sod. It had square holes for windows with ducking over them, a cottonwood door and a rock chimney and a dirt floor. Mother still had to cook on the fireplace. I really don't see how she did stand all that she had to endure. Our barn was a hole dug back in a bank and so was the hen house.

In the Summer several families would get together and take their bedding and cooking outfit and go over on the river and camp three and four days at a time and fish and hunt plums and grapes. We would have some time frying fish right on the bank and eating them. We also enjoyed getting plums and grapes for they were all the fruit we had.

Sometimes while living in the dugout the rattlesnakes would come to see us. Father shot one in our dugout that was seven feet long and had eighteen rattles, which Father still has.

We lived on our claim until 1904, then moved to Elk

City and Father put in a restaurant. At that time Elk City was mostly a tent town and was really seeing its saloon days.

I got the rest of my schooling here in Elk City and the first school I went to here was in an old frame building that had been moved over from Canute. It had been brought here for a church building and was propped up with poles to keep it from blowing over. I grew up and married here and have spent most of my life here.

Father and Mother are still living and reside at Bristow, Oklahoma. Father is blind and had the misfortune to lose one of his arms. He is eighty years old and Mother is seventy-eight.