

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

CONNOR, LESLIE LYNN INTERVIEW #10294

Field Worker's name Amelia F. Harris

This report made on (date) March 24 1938

1. Name Leslie Lynn Connor

2. Post Office Address Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Ramsey Tower Building

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

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father Walter Clinton Connor Place of birth Way, Kansas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Mary May Cole Connor Place of birth Lima, Ohio

Other information about mother Parents came to Oklahoma in 1900.

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 5

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Amelia F. Harris
Investigator
March 24, 1938.

Interview with Leslie Lynn Conner
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

My father, Walter Clinton Conner was born in Kansas, and my mother, Mary May Cole Conner, was born at Lima, Ohio.

My parents were married at O'Neill, Nebraska, and were tenant farmers in that state when on September 15, 1900, they left O'Neill in a covered wagon drawn by a pair of mules with a camping outfit, a rifle, four children and \$200.00 cash and started to the Promised land -Oklahoma Territory. We were twenty-six days making the trip; we pitched tent if the weather was bad and when it was raining we had to cook in the tent and the smoke was disagreeable for everybody. But when the weather was nice Mother made pallets down and she always put a rope around our pallets in accordance with an old saying that "a snake won't cross a rope", which I guess is true as there were snakes a plenty but none bothered us.

Dad would take his rifle and kill squirrels or rabbits for supper; sometimes he killed quail.

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We stoped one day every week for wash day and in preparation for that day mother would cook up food, especially cookies, and we would camp near a stream and everybody took a swim and put clean clothes on.

We forded the Republican, Cimarron and Red Rivers as there were not any bridges.

We finally stopped within eleven miles of Lone Wolf and we settled on a claim near Retrop, a small village, and lived in a tent on this farm for three months then moved to Cedar Top Hills in northwestern Kiowa County and Father bought a relinquishment from a man named W. A. Sims, for which he paid \$150 cash together with our mules, wagon and the rifle.

Dad built a one room 14 x 16 foot box house and left Mother and us four children on the farm and went to Anadarko and worked there all the winter of 1901, coming home every Saturday night and going back on Sunday evening.

Mother and we children broke out two and one-half acres of ground and planted it to cotton. The only thing we had to work with was an old blind horse and a walking

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plow but we made enough off of the two and one-half acres to buy another horse and a lot of groceries.

Father also worked at Chickasha that winter (1901) and in the spring he came back home and broke out twenty-five acres which was put in cotton and corn. In May Dad went to western Kansas and worked on a bank building but Mother and we children stayed on the farm and kept breaking out more land and making other improvements. Mother always had a good garden and canned or dried everything she could so we lived fairly well on butter, milk, eggs and vegetables. After the ~~first year we always had a hog to kill.~~

Mother got tired of living alone so in 1904 she and Father decided to rent the farm out and move to St. Joseph, Missouri, where Dad was working. She sold her horses, cows and chickens to the farmer on the place and rented a four room cottage in St. Joseph and we children went to school. However, Mother felt she should be doing something towards saving a "nest egg" for a rainy day. She said keeping house for six wasn't anything and that living in town all the money was spent for house rent, better clothes, and food so she

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finally persuaded Father to return to the farm in 1906.

They borrowed the money to make the trip back to the farm - \$200 - from a man and paid him 2% per month interest for the money. They bought a team and some tools and started farming again; they had plenty of feed, their part of rent off the farm. They took back the cows as the tenant never paid for them and Dad broke out more land, making one hundred-twenty acres in cultivation. They set out a big orchard in pear and peach trees, grapes and other fruits and they raised a fine garden - all kinds of vegetables, watermelons, muskmelons, cucumbers and cabbages.

I remember these things very vividly for Mother put up cucumbers by the barrels and made kraut by the barrel from the cabbage. She also made watermelon rind preserves and we banked up turnips, sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes in the cellar. My mother was a worker and nothing went to waste around her. We had the finest orchard in that part of the country.

In 1909 Dad moved his family to Hobart for better schools to educate his children. He built a tenant house

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and rented the farm again but reserved the home place with the orchard so we lived in town during the school term and went back to the farm from May to September so Mother could put up fruit and can vegetables. They kept this up until 1916 at which time they quit the farm altogether, bought a home in Hobart and lived there until 1922.

Dad got work in Ardmore in 1922 so they sold their home in Hobart and moved to Ardmore where they lived one year then moved to Oklahoma City where they have resided since.

Dad went into the paint business at 310 West Reno and they have resided here since 1924 but they still own the farm in Kiowa County and are the oldest living people who settled in that county and that part of the state. Mother finally reconciled herself to a quiet life without so much hard work.