

MORGAN, MARY.

INTERVIEW

13623

502

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

MORGAN, MARY.

INTERVIEW:

13623

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) April 18 1938

1. Name Mary Morgan

2. Post Office Address Bryant, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) In the back of the post office.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_ Year 1871

5. Place of birth Indiana

6. Name of Father George W. Milton Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Mary Rice Place of birth Indiana

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

MORGAN, MARY

INTERVIEW.

13623

Grace Kelley  
Investigator  
April 18, 1938

Interview with Mary Morgan  
Bryant, Oklahoma

I came to Ardmore in 1889, and my best remembrance of the trip to the Indian Territory was that there had been a terrible cyclone in Texas and for a long ways everything was laid flat. It hadn't hit the Indian Territory where I went through and I believe it was missed entirely.

My father had died and my older brother had a good team of mules that he didn't want to sell for he needed them to make a living with and couldn't sell them for as much as he would have to pay for another team. So we came to Ardmore in a wagon. We ferried the river at Denison, Texas, where the Colberts lived. In a later year, after I was married, I lived near the Colberts. My husband was a foreman and helped build a bridge right where the ferry had been.

Ardmore in 1889

Ardmore was a good town in 1889 as there were ranches all around it. The Choctaw and Gulf Railroad went through

MORGAN, MARY

INTERVIEW.

13623

2

it and an enormous number of Indians came there to trade. Lots of cattle were shipped from there and lots of freighting was done from there.

#### Buying a Home

We bought a half of a block of land and two houses were on it. We didn't get the same kind of deed that we had had in Texas but one that was called a "quit claim" deed. We bought the place from a white man named Baber and didn't sell it until years later.

#### Hotel Business at McAlester-1891

Mother's health got bad and we decided Ardmore was an unhealthy place to live so we moved to McAlester and rented a place in town. Brother bought another team and used both teams on the streets of McAlester. We kept boarders and roomers. We got \$4.00 a week for boarders and \$5.00 a week for room and board. We lived close to the railroad and kept the railroad men. Most of them just ate with us but the detective and baggage man stayed with us all the time besides the transients who just stayed a while. That was a fair price in those days

MORGAN, MARY.

INTERVIEW.

13623

## 3

as groceries and help were cheap. I had been used to negroes in Texas and not many whites would work in kitchens so I hired negroes here.

## Saturday a Busy Day

There was more money in McAlester than in any of the surrounding towns. There were just general merchandise stores in the smaller towns but McAlester had up-to-date clothing stores besides the other stores and people came from all the smaller towns to do their shopping just as they now go to Tulsa and Oklahoma City to shop. On Saturday night one could hardly walk on the streets for the people from outside of town.

We always planned to do a lot of work on Saturday. Lots of people camped out but the better class or the ones who had money would eat at the hotel.

## Choctaw Stomp Dance

I had a close Indian friend who was a Choctaw and I went to a stomp dance with her. I went more for curiosity than anything else but I found it interesting. The meeting had been going on for quite a while when we got

MORGAN, MARY.

INTERVIEW.

13623

## 4

there. A whole crowd of us went in a hack, about the same number of us white as Indian. A large fire had been built and a man was giving some medicine to some of the others who drank it by the cupful. Some of them wore blankets but others wore ordinary clothing.

When they started to dancing the dancers wore terrapin shells about their ankles and they made a terrible racket. Some of the white neighbors danced with them just like they were Indians and they danced all night. I got so tired that I had to go home for I wasn't used to it.

## Old Jailhouse

I was at McAlester before the penitentiary was there but there was a little jail on Choctaw Avenue not far from the present courthouse. One day they hanged a man in the jail just before daylight and I always hated to go past there after night after that. I thought it was a horrible thing but they had the hanging law for certain crimes.

## Wild Game

There were all kinds of wild game about seven miles

MORGAN, MARY.

INTERVIEW.

13623

5

outside of town but none near town. There were turkeys, deer, prairie chicken, etc. Wild turkey doesn't taste like a tame one because they eat differently. The prairie chicken was darker than our chicken and tasted wild but not like wild duck. There is no describing it exactly except to say it was a wild taste. It's a pity there were none left for our younger ones to sample as that's the only way they would really understand.