

CROSS, LOUBELLE.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) March 18, 1938

1. Name Mrs. LouBelle Cross

2. Post Office Address Geary, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) South side of Geary.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 15 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Stevens County, Texas.

6. Name of Father Alvin Newton Ice Place of birth West Virginia

Other information about father Pioneer of Texas and Oklahoma

7. Name of Mother Laura Jane Broome Ice Place of birth Alabama

Other information about mother Wife of a pioneer.

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 eight.

Custer, Augusta H.- Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History-S-149.
March 18, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. LouBelle Cross,
Geary, Oklahoma.

When I was eight years of age, my parents came from Stevens County, Texas, to the Indian Territory and settled near a place called Jimtown, and for years my father went to gainaville, Texas, for our supplies. He would make the trip with oxen twice a year, in the spring and fall, and would be away from home two weeks each time.

There were ten children of us and he would buy our shoes and clothing and groceries that would keep, such as lye to make soap, lamp wicks, tea, flour, soda, baking powder, and some simple home remedies in case of sickness. Later, we could get supplies at Chickasha at the Indian Agency if it was really necessary.

My father and the boys did all the farming with mules and two ponies. The only implements they had for many years were a plow, a harrow they made themselves, and a scythe. They raised corn and cotton.

Father built us a log house, two large rooms 20 x 20 placed so that there was a space in between which was

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roofed over and we cooked in this shed or porch between the two rooms. The two rooms on either side were used for bedrooms and each of them had a fireplace, for stoves were scarce in those days. At first we cooked on a fireplace.

(After we moved across the Red River, it was a year before we children saw a woman other than our mother; this was in 1877. We did not know what a newspaper looked like. When Father would go to Texas he would sometimes get a letter from some of our relatives if there had been a death or marriage in the family.

That was true contentment; our family were closer to each other and each one's troubles was the concern of the whole family. There was no rush hither and thither, one member going to a party fifty miles in one direction and another to church a few blocks away, another to a picture show and some other member to a political meeting. When we went to a picnic or fishing the whole family went. A new dress for one of the women or a shirt for one of the boys meant something to us all. There is no happiness without contentment and we had it. Mother knit our stockings and gloves, and we women folks sewed on our fingers for the family. Some years later we got a sewing machine; that was

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a great event in our family.)

My father was known as a good provider. We had milk and butter from the cows we got from the cattlemen in that section of the country; Father did not own any for many years. One time we got out of flour and we just had biscuits for Sunday morning breakfast for about six weeks, when Father made one of those long trips to Gainesville, Texas, for a six months supply of necessary things.

We got our news from the outlaws who came across the river to escape the officers. They told us what they knew about the outside world, and, as far as they were concerned, we asked no questions. You can easily see that this information would depend greatly upon the education, environment and associations of the person from whom we received the news.

Some of these outlaws would come from the Texas side of the river and stay with us for two or three weeks and they would sometimes offer my father money to get us the things we needed but he would always refuse. He told them to stay as long as they wished, that he did not ask them any questions, and for them to treat us as well as we tried to treat them. They would thank him and ask him to say that

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he had not seen anyone of their description if officers came looking for them.

We were, as a rule, very healthy, but one time Mother had pneumonia and our nearest neighbors were four and seven miles. One of them went sixty miles to a doctor for medicine. The doctor came and stayed a week until Mother was out of danger. We never had a doctor for confinement cases; the women of the neighborhood took care of each other.

One of our neighbor families had a man named Blake staying with them, who was one of those outlaws who just drifted in and stayed awhile. This man, who had been in the pen several times, was sick in bed of pneumonia and three officers came from across the river to take him. The woman had a rifle and when they stopped and told her what they wanted, she told them that he was in bed sick and they could not take him until he got well. They got off their horses and were coming in but she warned them to come no farther. One of the officers came a step too far and when she raised her gun and fired he dropped dead. The other two picked up the dead man and carried him away and did not come back for Blake.

There were lots of wild turkeys in the woods and Father

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would take his gun and go early in the morning and kill some for dinner. Gobblers usually make a noise about sunup; this would let my father know where they were and he would have no trouble in killing all he wanted, one or two for our dinner.

I never saw a Mexican lion or cougar but Father has told me of seeing them many times during the four years he lived on the north bank of Red River.

We lived at the mouth of Mud Creek and Father and my uncles often seined for fish. They would sometimes get an alligator gar in the seine which would cut through the seine and get away and all the other fish would get away, also. One time the men were cutting wood from the drift along the river and they found a gar. They shot the fish and when they got him out they found a harpoon fastened in his side that had probably been there for years.

We had a trough at the well where the horses drank, and Father would sometimes go down to the well and watch the bees come there for water. He was very patient and would watch the bees leave. After getting some water they would go straight to their tree or hiding place, and by following them Father would locate the honey. We had a lot of this

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wild honey which we enjoyed as we did not have all the sugar and candy that we wanted.

When Father went to a woods to cut logs or timber he would take his dinner with him. There was a small pond in this wood and this made an ideal place to eat his dinner. One time while eating there all was quiet except for the birds and insects humming about, then Father heard a soft mournful cry. He could not make up his mind for a while just where the sound came from or what was making that whining cry. He finished his dinner and following the sound came to a tree to which was tied a large Newfoundland dog. The dog was so weak that he could not stand, so Father took the chain loose from the tree and took the dog in his arms and carried him to the wagon and hauled him home. A dog of this species was rare in our part of the country and we never knew how or why this beautiful dog happened to be in that lonely spot. This pond had been named Jamison's Pond on account of the finding of the body of a man named Jamison who had been murdered there. Those who found the body buried it where it was found. A doctor in Gainesville, hearing of this body, offered Father five hundred dollars to dig up the bones and bring them to him, as he wanted the skeleton

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for his educational work, but Father refused.

After the Cheyenne-Arapaho opening, Father bought a relinquishment, built a house on the place and then came back for the family. This place is located north and a little west of Calumet, and the land is still in the family.

I was married to John Cross in 1890 and have seven children, five of whom are living. My husband was chief of police in Geary. Thirty-five years ago this July, while he was on duty, three men, who had robbed a post office in North Dakota, were supposed to be headed this way. Mr. Cross heard that there were some men camped north of Geary, who answered the description of these men, so went out to see about them and was shot. All three men got away at the time, there was so much excitement. Some of my husband's friends in Texas, where he had lived, came up here to help search for the three men. Three months later two of the men were shot at Osage Junction by officers. The other one, Hans Elliott, killed a negro in Kingfisher and escaped to Texas but was caught. His mother identified him, but seventeen other witnesses swore that he was not the man and he got loose. He had too much money. A woman swore that he was wanted in Oklahoma for two crimes but he was not convicted.

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After my husband's death I got along the best I could; some of my children were large enough to help.

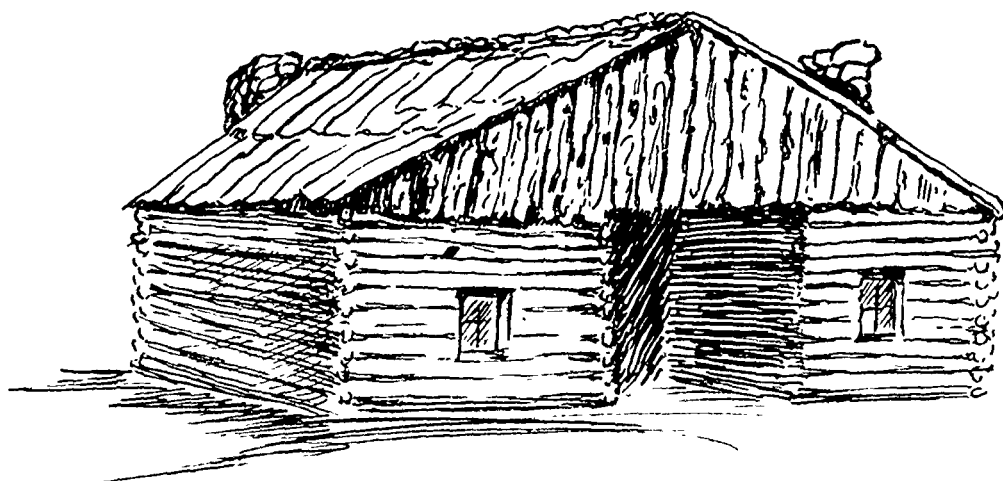
We sometimes went to picnics and this would be a great occasion. There would be six to eight beeves barbecued and the picnic would last a week; this was before we had enough settlers to have churches and schools.

Father sent me to school in Texas and finished high school at Whitesboro, Texas, after which I taught a subscription school three months in the year. The two years I taught I received \$1.50 per pupil per month. The first year I had twenty-three pupils and the second year I had thirty-five or forty. I taught in a one-room log schoolhouse built by the neighbors. One of my pupils was older than I. We just used any text books that any one happened to have, but the pupils seemed to learn and take more interest in books than the youngsters do today; they did not have so many things to distract them.

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A. H. Custer

A log house built like the one occupied by Alvin
Newton Ice in the Indian Territory in 1877.

This was the home of Mrs. Lou Belle Cross.