

DYKE, JOHN (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

9677

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

DYKE, JOHN (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

#9677

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) January 15, 1938 1938

1. Name Mrs. John Dyke
2. Post Office Address Eagle City, Oklahoma
3. Residence address (or location) West part of town.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1865
5. Place of birth Thurman, Iowa

Name of Father J. M. Ewall Place of birth Virginia

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Mrs. J. M. Ewall Place of birth Virginia

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 4

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Augusta H. Custer
Investigator
January 15, 1938

Interview with Mrs. John Dyke
Eagle City, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Fred Neuenschwander was here when I came and I was the second white woman in this part of Blaine County. We lived neighbors for over forty years, and the first two and a half years we lived in the same house.

We took the claim in 1892 a little north of Watonga. Mr. Dyke was appointed Post Master by Wilson S. Bissell, Post Master General, on August 11, 1894. The name of the office was Dyke. (Interviewer saw the certificate.) We came from Fremont County, Iowa. There were three covered wagons; we were eleven days on the road. I drove one team, my husband another and my brother-in-law the other. There was a settlement of colored folk to the south of us and they worked in the lumber business and cut posts to sell. We bought native lumber from them and built us a two room house.

We decided to keep a few supplies for the settlers and then with the Post Office that was a business that kept us at home most of the time.

I had a small baby and my father-in-law came to visit. Mr. Dyke was showing him ^{over} around the country. Part of the time

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I had been going with them, but one day I decided that I would stay at home. I saw a team and spring wagon coming and there were negroes in the wagon. I was so much afraid that I crawled up in the little loft where there should have been a ceiling, but ^{which} was not completed. I locked the door before going up there. These negroes knocked and tried to open the door, and I could hear them very plainly. I had to keep saying shhhh, shhhh to the baby to keep him still. After a while they went away and we found out later that they had just come to tell us some more of our lumber was ready for us any time we cared to get it.

I was always an awful coward, I was afraid of the outlaws and of the negroes but the Indians I was not afraid of. No one ever tried to make me do anything I did not want to do or threatened me, but I heard so many stories of robberies and having the Post Office I thought that they would feel sure that there would always be a little money there.

Mr. Dyke freighted his supplies for the store from up in Kansas and this left me alone quite often. I usually had a girl to stay with me, but one time when he was away a man

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came on horseback, he had two guns strapped on him. He told me that he would not hurt me and he took off the guns and gave them to me. But he said that he was going to stay all night. I did not let on that I was frightened. I prepared his supper and sent my little four year old boy a half mile to the nearest neighbor with a note and asked him to come over and stay all night with me. He brought the child and came.

Another time when Mr. Dyke was away a man came and he sure looked like an outlaw. He had a Winchester which he never let out of his reach. He asked me to get him something to eat, and sat with the gun on his lap while he was eating. He would not look me in the face. After he had eaten a good meal he offered to pay with a ten dollar bill. I told him that I did not have any money. So he went on without paying for his food. I did not want him to know that we had that much money in the house or post office.

There were many Government men being robbed of the money which they were to give to Indians. One time a Government man from Cantonment came to our house and left with the money for Geary before daylight, and afterward we found out that there were some robbers hiding where they thought he

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would have to pass, but he had already passed the place and stayed at our house.

I was alone another night and five white men came. They all had guns and they camped not far from our house. I was very much afraid and there was an Indian came to the store by the name of Henry Lincoln. I trusted him and told him that I was scared of these men with guns. He said he would find out who they were. After he had talked to them he came and told me that I need not be afraid of them, that they were only hunting.

The school house in our district was made a half dugout, the rest was native lumber. A man by the name of Arnold was hired by subscription, to teach a three months school. Everyone who had a child in school had to furnish a seat for the pupil. There was certainly a variety of seats. There were twenty or twenty-five pupils, and this was a crowded school.

We often had play parties and later when there were more board floors there were dances.