

INDEX CARDS

Greer County
Doan's Crossing
Old Frazier
Clothing
Buttermilk Station
Living Conditions
Sod House
Centipedes and Snakes
Entertainment
Churches
Schools

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

Field Worker's name Ethel D. Pfeiffer

This report made on (date) June 9, 1937

1. Name Mrs. J. L. Ealum

2. Post Office Address Olustee, Route 3, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month Sept. Day 11 Year 1883

5. Place of birth Near Grayson, Grayson County, Texas

6. Name of Father J.B. Walker Place of birth Texas

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Mary McClearn Place of birth No.

Other information about mother Mother of 7 children

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 _____.

EALUM, J.L. (MRS). INTERVIEW.

Ethel D. Pfeiffer, Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History
June 9, 1937

37

Experiences of Mrs. J.L. Ealum
Olustee, Rt. 3

Yes, I guess you would call me a pioneer, as I came here in 1885. At that time I was only two years of age. We came from Grayson County, Texas, in a covered wagon. There were three families, my parents, my mother's parents, (Grandfather and Grandmother John McClearen) my uncle and family. My father and mother had heard about the wonderful opportunities that were here for any one who wanted to take up the land and make a home, and as the land in Texas, where we lived, was so high, they had given up the hope of ever owning a home there. So that was the reason for their coming here. My father wanted to leave many times, but mother just wouldn't consider leaving, many who came and got choice land traded it for teams and wagons and some times a little money to get back home, but my mother was one of the "stayers".

When we were to cross the river, we came to Dean's crossing, and we stayed there two or three weeks. My sister, Rosa Walker, was born while we were camped there. We came on to the east side of Salt Fork, before we found the kind of land we wanted for a home. Not knowing about the big rains, or the high water mark we made a location on Bitter Creek, which was later called Old Frazier. My aunt, Mrs. Jennie Holt, was the first Post Mistress. There

were at this time only to other families in Greer County. We cooked in a dutch oven, and had the best bread. We had iron pots, to hang on hooks to cook vegetables and we found wild greens in abundance on the creeks and rivers.

Our Clothes

I can say one thing, we wore more clothes then than the girls do at this time. We wore three petticoats that were tucked and pleated to the bottom. I remember one outfit that my mother had bought me, after I was grown, or thought I was grown. The whole outfit cost only \$2.50, and she bought me hat, shoes, gloves, cotton hose and the dress, which she made by hand. My, but I can look back now and say that I was the happiest girl in all of that County.

Our First Town

My grandfather and Grandmother McClearen had the first hotel. This was a two story house, with a basement, and was used in the early day as a station for the stage, coaches. The cowboys stopped often and were served with good cold butter milk so they called it "Butter Milk" station, and as such it was known for miles around. My grandparents were Uncle John and Aunt Susie to all who knew them. This house was two miles south of Old Frazier. When I was still quite small I stayed with my grandparents, and went to school. I was never a strong

child but I hauled water, and my sister and I plowed with a four team outfit, and used a gang plow. We had to cut the thistles out of the wheat with a sharp hoe.

The flood

In the year of 1891 we had a very big rain, Bitter Creek and Salt Fork ran together and we had to leave our homes. The men put the women and children in a hack, but there was not room for my mother in the hack, so she held onto the back and walked through the water, which was very swift and a waist deep. There was no loss of lives, but the high water mark was sufficient proof of the hazardous location of the little town, which had at this time about two or three hundred inhabitants. There were four or five grocery stores, two dry goods stores, one drug store and two doctors, named Fowler and McReynolds, living there.

Improvements

No, No, we didn't have an improved place, we had a dug hole in the ground. We had a lot of mesquite wood for fuel, and we drank any water that we could get out of buffalo wallows, puddle holes, but later dug cisterns. We had a sod house, with dirt floor and dirt walls, but at first we just had a tent that was stretched out until the dugout was built. This was a hole about 12'x16' and

about 6' deep, dirt floors and walls. The top was made of heavy cotton wood logs laid across with grass, with dirt thrown on top. This made a nice snug house, but the bark on the logs was a good housing place for the centipedes. Often when lying awake we would see one crawl out and drop down on the bed, then how we would scramble to get out of bed. We would often see a rattle snake coiled upon the ledge but we always were lucky in killing all we found. The bull and chicken snakes were very bad about getting our eggs and young chickens.

Provisions

We got our supplies mostly from Doan's crossing. My father was a freighter, making trips from Wichita Falls to Hobectie Texas. It took him thirty days, if he had good luck, to make the trip and return. He had to cross Big Red and the Pease Rivers, and a number of smaller and rather dangerous streams, but the big problem that always confronted him was the two big rivers. No one ever knew how long he would have to wait during the rainy weather for the water to run down to where it was safe for him to cross. No one ^{was} ever alone at the crossing. Sometimes there would be as many as twenty or more wagons. Some were movers and some freighters, so we

were confident of having help in case of trouble. My father was never attacked by the Indians, as they didn't come over this far very often. When they did come it was to beg for groceries. Most of all they wanted coffee, and on several occasions were rather insistent about getting some coffee; we always gave them some to get rid of them. We were acquainted with Quanah Parker, and have visited in his home. He was a Comanche and had the house painted with the stars and stripes. Sometimes when we ran out of provisions we had to eat beans for bread, but we didn't often do this as we knew what to depend in laying in our supplies. We got dry goods once or twice a year. We bought honest "stick to the rib" grub, bacon and beans, and we paid five cent. per pound for the bacon, when we had to buy it.

Farm products

We raised sorghum cane, and had it made into syrup. We had our own corn, and had it ground into meal. We made our own soap with lye made from wood ashes and we called it ashe hopper lye. We came here to get a home, and after farming the land we found that it was very productive and would grow most any thing we planted. The soil was very rich, and we made plenty to keep us.

Entertainment.

We had dances, and a good literary society in which both old and young took part. When we went to a dance, we would have a midnight supper, and dance all night. We would go for miles on horse back to these dances. My uncle played for the dances, and he took his daughter and me. We danced the toe and heel and the schottische, which we thought very beautiful.

Church

The first church was organized by a Methodist Minister whose name was Rev. Mosmer. This meeting was held in my grandfather's dugout and they had preaching after this at regular dates. We often met at the different homes for services. When the school house was built we met there, and as the churches were organized and built, the dances weren't so popular. Now after many years, there are no more dances.

Neighbors

The first year we came here our nearest neighbors were the Sweet family who lived at Mangum, some twenty miles north of us. Our other neighbors were a family who lived at Navajo, whose name was Yeckley.

Stock

Although we didn't go in for stock we had to have our cows branded, ours was S

There were lots of Prairie chickens, wild turkey, antelope and plenty of buffalo bones all over the hills. These animals were killed for the hides, and the Indians killed them for their meat.

My marriage.

I married J.L. Kalum. We grew up together, fought, and quarrelled as most children do. He worked for my father for about two years, and I guess that was when we fell in love. His father had filed on a farm about five miles west of the present town of Altus, the SW¹/₄ Section 16, Twp 2 North of Range 21 W., in 1899. Then when we married my husband bought this farm and we moved on it, and have been here since. This was a choice piece of land, and later has proved to be a good location. I had some good neighbors, but one in particular has stood out in my memory as being better than all the rest. Mrs. F.J. Eldridge, who lived some two miles south of our farm, and almost reared my first child. He was subject to croup, and when he would take it, the first thing my husband would do was to go as fast as he could for Mrs. Eldridge. She never failed to come and stayed until she knew he was better. No one knows how much comfort it was for her to come, when we were so far away from a doctor, and he across the river. She was a real neighbor.

School

I was too small to remember the first teacher. The terms were three months subscription school. This was at Old Frazier and my first teacher was a Mr. Elder. J.R. McMahon followed, then a man came in and taught an arithmetic school.

Yes, I know the times were hard, but we had had many, many pleasures that only pioneers could share, and have in common. The friendly, neighborly spirit that we shared has made it worth while. Taken as a whole, I am glad that I had the experience of being a pioneer child and mother.