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

Field Worker's name Mrs. Nora Lorrin

This report made on (date) July 13 1937

1. Name Mrs. Nora DeBaum Eades

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 802 South Roberts.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 6 - Year 1871

5. Place of birth Illinois

6. Name of Father Mr. William DeBaum Place of birth Indiana

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

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 _____.

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. NORA DEBAUM KADES
802 South Roberts, El Reno, Okla.
Nora Lorrin, Interviewer

Mrs. Nora DeBaum Kades was born in Shelby County, Illinois, November 6, 1871. Her father, William DeBaum, staked a claim in the race of April 22, 1889. It was located a mile east of Choctaw Avenue, on Foreman Street, and was the southwest quarter of the section. They came here from Prescott, Arkansas. Her father bought a relinquishment for her sister, who was old enough to file on a claim. He met them at Oklahoma City, in a covered wagon when they came from Prescott Arkansas, on the train. As he was not expecting Nora and her mother, he had provided seats only for himself and the older sister; so she and her father had to sit in the back end of the wagon on a chicken coop on the trip from Oklahoma City to the claim.

People were generous, honest, dependable, and neighborly. They would send to town for groceries and other supplies by their neighbors, often sending produce along to pay for them. Her father often did this, as a neighborly accommodation.

One day as they were nearing home, a woman came out

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to the wagon for the groceries she had ordered and insisted that Mrs. Eades stay all night with her. She stayed, because there were not enough beds at home to accommodate the extras. It was her first experience with the west and western dust. The woman lived in a tent-house. It was boarded up with six boards and the tent placed over them. She slept with the woman and her two children, and every time she turned over, dust would puff up in her face. The next morning she was awakened by the howling of the coyotes, and when she got up and looked out at the country, she said she knew what people meant when they spoke of the great out of doors. Looking around she saw nothing but prairie, with smoke curling out of a dugout here and there, and a few tents dotting the landscape. Mrs. Eades' mother taught her children that they could always find what they looked for, and to look for the bright side of things; consequently, they got along fine and did not get homesick.

She found the people here at that time neither wild nor woolly. They were honest. If anyone made you a promise, it was not questioned. One knew it would be kept. Both the young and middle aged had come to look for homes to settle on and they meant to do a good job of it.

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One time a dangerous prairie fire broke out near their cabin, the slough grass was as high as one's head and their father was three quarters of a mile north on the river cutting wood. The fire first broke out south and east of El Reno, and they were frightened but did not know what to do about it. A couple of men drove up, riding in an old buggy, with their camping equipment, and driving an old gray horse. Both of the men were old, one a white man, the other a negro. They asked, "Why ain't you starting your back fire?" Mrs. Eades told them that she didn't know what a back fire was. The old fellows got out their gunny sacks, wet them, built a back fire and started fighting the fire. It was so high that it hid the house. Had it not been for those two old men, whom they had never seen before, nor afterward, they might have lost their lives, as well as their home. As soon as the fire died down and the smoke cleared away so that they could be seen, they ran out and signalled to their father that they were all right. They knew he would be worried. Seeing him coming, they waved their bonnets at him, and he jubilantly waved back with his hat. He was glad his home and family

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had escaped the fire. After the fire had died down, people from El Reno came to see if they were all right. There was an Indian allotment north, between their claim and the river. When the Indian man saw the fire coming, he saturated his lariat rope with kerosene, got on his pony, and set his back fire by dragging the burning lariat over the ground between the fire and his home. Another method of fighting fire, of which she had heard, but never seen, was practiced by the cowboys. When there was a prairie fire and no water close, they would kill a beef, cut it in half, tie their lariat ropes to it, and drag it up and down the fire, to smother it out.

Mr. DeBaum used to go to the river and drag up the dead logs that he would find washed up down there, for fire wood. He had to come by an Indian camp, and the little Indian kids would jump up on the log and try to ride it. Sometimes it turned with them, causing them to fall. If they cried the squaw yelled at them, calling them "White Face". They always stopped crying when she called them that.

We had Sunday school in a school house built by the bachelors' donations. The minister, Rev. Russell, walked

from Old Frisco to El Reno, to preach on Sunday. When he came to the river five miles east of El Reno, he took off all his clothes, but his underwear and waded the river. When he got across, he redressed. He was a very tall man with a long beard. That building was a town hall on Saturday night, a church on Sunday, and a school house the rest of the week. It was located about where the city hall is now. The teacher's desk was homemade, and the children sat on benches and chairs.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians would often dance all night long, before the reservation was opened to settlement. One could hear their weird chanting and the beating of their tom toms. It kept the people stirred up, fearful there would be an outbreak.

In 1889, about thirty wagon loads of negroes stopped here and camped about where the mills are now located, at 1002 South Bickford Street. They planned to stay in El Reno. There being only a handful of white people in El Reno at the time, they wondered what they could do about it. They didn't want all those negroes to settle in the town. A Mr. Jalonick told them to leave it to him. He

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went to the negro camp that evening and bragged Kingfisher to the skies. He told them it was the best townsite he knew of and that it was a wonderful place, with good water and rich sandy land, which would raise anything, plenty of wood, etc. The next morning all of the negroes were gone.

There used to be a school located about where Webber's Wallpaper store is now at 205 South Rock Island S. N. Hopkins was the teacher, He taught about the time the Jennings boys were acting up. When it was time to dismiss the school, Mr. Hopkins would go ^{to} the door and scan the street. If the Jennings boys were anywhere in sight he would tell the children to go straight home and not go by the postoffice. There was one negro boy who went to the white school. The drinking water they used was passed in a bucket, with one tin cup for everyone to drink from. Mrs. Eades said that if the water was passed to the negro boy before it came to her, she would not drink, so sometimes had to go without.

When a man or anyone of prominence came to town, everybody chipped in and bought two or three beeves and gave them to the Indians to induce them to come into town

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in their regalia and give a dance for the amusement of the newcomer. The Indian men wore their feather war bonnets and the squaws came dressed in loose and beaded garments, carrying their papooses in baskets, or pouches on their backs.

One day Mrs. Eades went with a neighbor woman and her three little boys to peddle watermelons to the Indians. The Indian men would trade the things that belonged to the men, for watermelons. She saw a baby basket, or pouch fastened to a sharp pointed stick and stuck into the ground by the side of a tepee. She told the woman who was with her, "here's a real live papoose." Running over to the basket she pulled up the flap, and found it was filled with beaded moccasins, belts etc. The squaws jeered, "White squaw, heep fool." The same day an old Indian man came up to the wagon and wanted to trade a pair of worn out moccasins for a watermelon. The woman who was her companion would not trade, but Mrs. Eades, feeling sorry for the old fellow, who seemed so stiff, picked up a nice long watermelon and gave it to him. The woman turned to her and asked, "now why did you do that", and she answered, because I wanted to. The old Indian looked up at them and began juggling the watermelon. He

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then put on the finest Indian dance she had ever seen. He jumped higher than any dancer she had ever seen. She had thought him hardly able to walk. After he quit dancing, her companion told her that she was glad she had given him the melon.

One of their neighbors had a girl away at school. When she came home she always wanted to ride horseback, and often rode by herself. Her father was afraid for her to be out by herself, especially as the horses she wanted to ride were young and not any too well broken. He had an old horse called Old Nig that was pastured in the pasture of Mrs. Eades' father. Mrs. Eades rode the horse in the morning as far as its owner's place, then walked the rest of the way to school. In the evening she took it back out to the pasture. The girl's father talked to Mrs. Eades and asked her to give his daughter, Edie, a scare in order to cure her of riding alone. She did not want to do it but told him she would think about it. One day Edie rode over to their house and as there was nothing else to do, they decided to go down to the river to get persimmons. A day or two before this, some neighbor boys had been down on the river with

their bull dog and it had gotten badly chewed up by a bob-cat. Mrs. Eades told Edie about it and dwelt on the story, making as much of it, as possible. When they reached the persimmon patch, and were filling their buckets, they heard an unusual noise. Mrs. Eades cried sharply, "What's that?" Then running to the horses, she took the best one, mounted him and left on high, leaving Old Nig for Edie. It scared Edie almost to death. She got on Old Nig and rode away leaving the persimmons, and she never rode alone after that.

Mrs. Eades has seen Indians at the issue pens, kill a beef, skin the hide back, cut out the liver, lay it on the ground and set some little paposes around it. They would go after it like a lot of little puppies after a bone. They cut the gall sack, poured its contents in a cup and drank it. The entrails were cut in lengths, stripped down between thumb and finger, given a flip or two and eaten raw and unwashed. These were the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians.

The Caddo Indians made an arbor bed like this: They drove four posts about three feet high in the ground. Then poles were laid solidly across them and covered with bark.

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Next four tall poles were placed at the corner of this platform. They then built a roof with grass and limbs woven tightly enough to shed rain. They slept on the platform under this rain proof roof. In the fall they cut willow poles and put them up and down around their sleeping arbor in a sort of stockade, as protection from the wind and cold. The stockade was built almost as high as the tallest poles.

Mrs. Eades drew a claim in 1901, when the Kiowa and Comanche country opened. It was located eighteen miles southwest of El. Reno and she taught school and improved the place with her earnings. She first had a dugout, and then a frame building built over it. She said she was as proud of it as a boy with a pair of red top boots. She had a monkey stove with an oven drum on it. She built a house later and let the family move into it. She lived in the dugout until a flood came, and then moved into the granary. Her father built her a table and hinged it to the wall and when she wanted to use it, she raised it and put a stick under it. When not in use she took the stick out and let the table down against the wall.

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She raised a big garden the first year and hoed it, but she decided one day to plow it instead of using the hoe, so she borrowed a horse, a dun pony, and a plow from a neighbor. The neighbor's boy, Clifford Ellrod, helped her hitch up the horse. She started to plow one corner and the pony took the bit in his teeth, and they came out at the corner diagonally across from where they started, plowing up beets, turnips, cucumbers, etc. She sent Clifford to ask his father if he would please come over and plow the garden for her. She had found something that she could not do. He came laughing as he had been watching, and told her that he had been expecting it.

She taught in the winter time and made garden in the summer. Neighbors were very loyal and helpful to her. She taught in town and went out week ends, sometimes oftener. If the neighbors were in the field and saw her coming, they would unhitch, and come down to the river and stay until she was safely across. The South Canadian has always had a reputation for quicksand. One evening a strange man rode across the river with her to see that she got safely across. She did not know who he was and it was some time before she saw him again.

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A man by the name of Barker was rounding up part of his herd of cattle one day. He crossed the South Canadian to the side opposite to that on which his home stood. The river came up suddenly and he could not swim. As he was expecting company he thought he had to get home. He took off all his clothes with the exception of his hat, wrapped the clothing in a bundle and tied it to his saddle. Then he headed his horse into the river, taking a good hold of the horse's tail. He knew the pony would pull him across all right. The opposite bank was steep and slippery and when the horse started up it he jerked his tail and Mr. Barker let go. The horse didn't stop, but headed for home. There he was with nothing on but a hat. Nudism wasn't popular at that time, but no one was in sight, so he struck out for home and came in by way of the corn patch. He saw that the company had arrived and he yelled for his wife. She came out but instead of listening to his explanation, she ran back to the house and told her brother that her husband had gone crazy, that he was out in the corn patch without a thing on but his hat. Her brother went out and asked him what he was doing and when Mr. Barker explained the situation the brother brought him some clothes.

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Mrs. Eades met him at the home of some friends a day or two later, and he proved to be the strange man who had so kindly helped her across the river. She said, "Hello, how have you been getting along these days?" The men howled with laughter. As she had not heard of the un-dressed episode, she did not know until later why they were laughing.

They used to go on picnics and often cooked chickens or beef out in an open iron kettle, hung over the fire on wagon rods. They cooked eggs and potatoes by wrapping them in very wet paper and burying them in hot ashes. Sometimes the men barbecued the meat. They usually had these picnics in Spring Canyon located about four miles northwest of her claim. They had one picnic at Devils Canyon.

She has an iron bedstead now that she had when she took her claim. She and her sister, Miss Iona DeBaum, have a pin tray made of wood from an apple tree cut from their grandfather's place in Indiana. The seed was brought from Ohio to Indiana and planted in 1820. The tree died and was made into lumber in 1890. The wood is very hard, and the little tray is attractive. They own a Bible published by

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The American Bible Society, D.&G. Bruce, New York, in 1819, that is more than one hundred years old.

Mrs. Eades lived on her claim for fifteen years.

She was married in 1905 to Mr. Joseph Eades. He had two children and two others were later born to them, making four, two boys and two girls. She says they all seemed to belong to her. Her son, Mr. D. W. Eades, graduated from O. U. and is practicing medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. Her daughter is Home Economics instructor at the State University, Urbana, Illinois.