

LUSTER, SARAH ELLEN.

INTERVIEW

8530

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

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Field Worker's name John F. Daugherty.

This report made on (date) September 16, 1937. 1937

Name Sarah Ellen Luster.

Post Office Address Mill Creek, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 4 Year 1853.

5. Place of birth Tennessee.

6. Name of Father McHenry Meltberger. Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about father Operated licensed Government still.

7. Name of Mother Barbara Faust. Place of birth Tennessee.

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 _____

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John Daugherty,
Investigator,
Sept. 16, 1937.

Interview With Sarah Ellen Luster,
Mill Creek, Oklahoma.

My parents were McHenry Meltaberger and Barbara Faust, born in Tennessee. Father was a farmer and he operated a Government still in Tennessee. There were eight children in our family.

I was born in Tennessee September 4, 1853, and was married there December 25, 1874, to Jerome Luster. We came to Texas in 1880 and to the Indian Territory in 1891. We settled on Wilson Creek east of Ardmore in the Chickasaw Nation. We had a fine sulphur spring on our place where I had a milk house built. There was no need of ice there in the warm weather. That water was ice cold on the hottest days. I sold butter in Ardmore at 25 cents per pound. We later moved to Nebo south of

Sulphur, where my husband had a gin and a general merchandise store. He freighted his goods from Denison and also from Daugherty, by wagon. He kept wagons on the road all the time. He had a great deal of trade among the full bloods.

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They were good customers and could be trusted to the fullest extent. If they promised to pay on a certain day, they were there whether they had the money or not. If they were unable to pay they had an explanation, and as soon as they received the money they came back. Mr. Luster didn't lose a thing by crediting the full bloods, but the white men were not so dependable. As a class the Indians were more pleasant to deal with than the white men. Mr. Luster never required a mortgage for a debt. He always said if a man's word wasn't good, neither was his mortgage.

I kept a boarding house for the employees at the gin and for travelers.

My husband built the first telephone line from Daugherty to Nebo and later to Mill Creek. The line was built on to Mill Creek when the townsite was being laid out, so that Mr. Luster could keep in touch with what was being done there.

The Indians used to get drunk and ride up to my house while my husband was away. They would get off their horses, come in and pick my daughter up and carry

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her around. They taught her to speak a few Indian words. It delighted them to hear her childish voice speaking their language. I was always fearful they would get her on a horse some day and carry her off. But they would usually shoot into the fireplace several times, look for food, and depart. I was afraid of them, but I didn't run. They meant no harm, but they enjoyed frightening white people.

We were living in Mill Creek when the 'Frisco Railroad was built here about 1901. My husband had moved his gin and store here. Our store was the first one. A doctor's office, made picket style, was the first business building.

One morning I was in the yard when I noticed a train in the distance. I went and watched them lay the rails. They laid the ties, then placed the rails in front of the work train. The train would move up the length of the rails and a crew of negroes would spike the rails at the rear of the train. It seemed like slow work, but we were very proud of our railroad after it was finished.

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Mill Creek became the greatest cattle shipping point in the Chickasaw Nation.

Our first depot was lighted with a lantern.

I am the mother of three children.