

MURRAY, KATIE

INTERVIEW

#9064

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

MURRAY, KATIE.

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Field Worker's name Anna R. Barry.

This report made on (date) October 18, 1937. 193

1. Name Mrs. Katie Murray.

2. Post Office Address El Reno, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 1021 West Woodson Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 4 Year 1864.

5. Place of birth Glasgow, Scotland.

6. Name of Father John Gardner. Place of birth Glasgow, Scotland.

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Anna Arkhikle Gardner. Place of birth Glasgow, Scotland.

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 6.

Anna R. Barry,
October 18, 1937.
Journalist.

An Interview With Katie Murray,
El Reno, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Katie Gardner Murray was born in Glasgow, Scotland, July 4, 1864, the eldest daughter of John Gardner and Anna Arbuckle Gardner.

She was brought across the water at the age of four, in 1868.

Her parents, after coming to the United States, located at Langston, Illinois.

It was in Langston that she received her education.

The Gardner family consists of seven children, three boys and four girls. This family continued to live in the state of Illinois until 1882.

Mrs. Murray was eighteen years of age when the family located near Osage City, Kansas.

On May 21, 1885, Katie Gardner married James Murray.

Just sixteen months after they were married her husband passed away, on September 28, 1886.

It was at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Opening, April 19, 1892, that Mrs. Murray's brother and four other men came to Canadian County. They made the run and staked claims adjoining, thirteen miles northwest of El Reno.

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It was early in the month of May that these four men became dissatisfied with the new country and decided to leave. At this time Mrs. Murray's brother wrote them in Kansas telling them to pack their bag and baggage and hurry to El Reno, and they could take up these four claims.

These families came by rail to El Reno, chartered a car and shipped their furniture and other belongings. Mrs. Murray recalls that it was near the 15th of May, 1892, when they landed in El Reno. Here her brother met them with a wagon and team and took them to his place. The next day they looked over the claims, each one deciding which claim they wanted.

Mrs. Murray at the age of twenty-one had taken out her naturalization papers to become a citizen of the United States and this gave her a right to file on land.

Mrs. Murray and her little son, James Jr., who was five years old at this time, with the aid of her brother, built a little two room frame house, eighteen by twenty-four feet. This house was a plastered house the only plastered house for miles around. This little home had two outside doors.

Mrs. Murray had a walnut bedroom suite that was a wedding gift from her father. On the floor was a red

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carpet; she bought a small cook stove after coming to El Reno. Her brother gave her a safe or cupboard and some chairs which he had purchased at Fort Reno. These had been condemned by the government and were sold at public auction; these chairs have "I. C" marked on them, and sold for twenty-five cents each. She said people often remarked in those days what nice furniture she had in her home. Mrs. Murray is using most of this furniture in her home today, and it is in good condition.

A lot of Mrs. Murray's land was in timber and it was slow work for her to clear it. She and her little son lived alone, worked from daylight until dark clearing land and when they completed their days work each evening they would carry wood from the woods to cook their evening meal.

There was so much talk of the Indians and Indian scares that the first summer Mrs. Murray lived on her claim every night she bolted both doors and nailed down each window securely.

In those days they didn't have the screen doors and latches like we do today. Mrs. Murray said they almost smothered every night with the doors and windows closed.

About the first thing Mrs. Murray did on her claim was to clear two acres of land, break the sod and set out

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two acres in orchard. The first summer was a very hot and dry season; she carried water one-fourth mile to water this little orchard so as to keep the trees alive.

With the aid of her father and brother Mrs. Murray dug a well on her claim. In digging this well they had to blast through forty feet of solid rock, but when through this they reached a vein of fine water. Later, they walled this well with native rock and built a frame over it from which hung a pulley, rope and bucket.

Mrs. Murray bought one dozen fine plymouth rock hens, two heifers, and a cow.

When she first located there she received her mail at Fort Reno, but in a year or two a little store and postoffice combined was established where Calumet now stands.

She did most of her trading at El Reno.

People in those days didn't have money; they thought they were well off if they had five dollars.

They raised most of their living on the farm and it was very seldom they came to El Reno.

People in those days were good to divide with one another. If a neighbor ran out of coffee or sugar other neighbors shared with them.

Mrs. Murray broke out four acres of sod and the first Fall planted it to wheat.

Mrs. Murray's first school was at a farm house, taught by her sister. Later, Rock Dale School was established, two and one-fourth miles from their claim.

They attended Sunday School and church five miles from their home, walking there and back making a ten mile trip.

It was hard in the early days to sell produce Mrs. Murray says once a neighbor lady and herself had so many nice frying chickens that they decided to bring them to Fort Reno to sell, but after they had canvassed Fort Reno, they were unable to sell their chickens so they took them on to El Reno. Here they sold them for ten cents each. Mrs. Murray also sold butter for twelve to fifteen cents per pound and eggs for five cents a dozen.

The only wild fruits on Mrs. Murray's claim were wild currants, sand plums and wild grapes. The plum jelly tasted good, but required lots of sugar.

At this time roads had not been established, people just followed the trails and there were plenty of mudholes.

At the age of eleven years Mrs. Murray's son, James Jr., began farming. He would walk and plow; all farming

implements in those days required one to walk.

When Mrs. Murray's son started planting corn he asked her to walk behind him to see if she thought the planter was working right. She became awfully tired walking up one row and down the other.

Mrs. Murray said her son didn't have any childhood like other children as he started doing the work of a man at the age of eleven years.

Mrs. Murray and her son continued to live on their farm until 1910, when they sold this place and purchased a farm eight and one-half miles southwest of the El Reno mills.

Today Mrs. Murray's son is married and has one son.

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