

LOWMAN, OLLIE

INTERVIEW

#9480

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

LOWMAN, OLLIE

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Field Worker's name August H. Custer.

This report made on (date) December 14, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Ollie Lowman

2. Post office Address Geary, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) on Highway 270

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day Year 1884

5. Place of birth Paducah, Kentucky.

6. Name of Father John Sullivan Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father pioneer - farmer

7. Name of Mother Mary Sullivan Place of birth Tennessee

Step-mother Dolly Sullivan
Other information about mother Mother died about 1895

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the subject here given. Refer to manual for suggested questions and directions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 7.

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Augusta H. Custer,
Investigator,
December 14, 1937.

AN Interview with Mrs. Ollie Lowman,
Geary, Oklahoma.

I came with my parents in a covered wagon, from Urich, Missouri, to Butte. This place is now known as Oakwood; there was just a store and post office there when we came and the mail was carried on horseback three times a week from Kingfisher. We had an old white mule and I often would ride this old mule and go to the store for the mail and what necessities we had money to buy.

An uncle and his family started out here with us but they decided to stop in Southwest City, Missouri, so my folks came on without them as my eldest brother was out here and had taken up a claim. After our mother died my brother left home and came west. Father married again and then we came to my brother. He had a two room house made of native lumber. There was no floor and the partition was two logs and then we stretched a curtain the rest of the way to the ceiling and that was what we called two rooms.

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Later Father took up eighty acres and built a two room log house.

We lived with Brother one year, and there were six of us in those two small rooms. My brother contrived to build a folding bed some way, and it could be taken down during the day. As nearly as I can remember, it worked something like the tables that are used in camp cottages. It was just like a table and would fold up to the wall and be hooked during the day and had little legs that supported it during the night.

Many a night and evening all the light we had was a brush fire built on the stove hearth. It kept someone replenishing the fire all the time. Of course this let the smoke escape into the room and this would make our eyes smart and burn, besides it smoked the ceiling black. We did not have money to keep coal oil all the time.

I remember that we often grated corn to make corn bread when the roasting ears became too hard to eat off

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the cob. As I remember it made good bread; we always used about two eggs in one batch of bread.

When I was old enough I worked out for \$1.50 per week. In this way I helped my folks and bought my clothes and some for my sister. I am sure that we did not have more than \$12.00 worth of clothing during the year. When we went to church and Sunday School we walked about three miles and to save our shoes we carried them and went bare-footed through the black jacks. The rough path would have scarr'd our shoes and worn the soles out but our feet would heal if we snagged or scratched them. We were not the only ones who did this. Most of our neighbors did the same way especially if they had to walk.

When my father's family left Southwest City, Missouri, where my uncle stayed, we had just \$10.00. We were two weeks on the road and had to buy horse feed part of the time and when we arrived Father had some of that \$10.00 left.

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I worked for a Mrs. Young and she was considered to be pretty well off. She had clothing that was sent to her from relatives back East and she did not look like the rest of us who bought the cloth and made our own clothes. Some sewed with their hands as sewing machines were scarce in those days. I remember the first hat I ever owned. I thought it was the prettiest thing that I had ever seen and thought that I was quite extravagant in buying it as it cost \$1.50. It was a sailor hat and covered with flowers.

Indians were plentiful and while I was working for Mrs. Young an Indian came and put his hand up to his face and looked in the window. I did not know there was anyone near until I saw his shadow on the wall. He was an old Indian and he would come in the house and take hold of you, talking all the time and no white people could understand him. Perhaps it was because we women were so scared of him. He never hurt anyone.

I was married to Ben Lowman when I was sixteen

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years old. He had a job with the Government keeping a stallion for breeding purposes. The Indians used to bring their mares to this horse in order to encourage the Indians to raise better ponies. Ben got \$45.00 a month. We lived down near the place where Bridgeport is today. But we were stationed on the north side of the South Canadian River. There were no houses there at that time and we lived in a tent. Mr. Lowman made a table and we paid an Indian 25 cents a month rent for a cookstove. We had a bed which Ben made from some boards.

I remember one night there was an awfully hard rain and the water came through that tent like there was no canvas. Ben piled everything in the tent on me to keep me dry and almost crushed and smothered me as everything got wet. I got up and crawled under the table as it had oilcloth on it; it kept the rain off of me but I was already wet and cold. As soon as the worst was over we went to Mr. John Tyler's house; he was the Indian Agent and we camped near his house.

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Mr. Tyler gave the Indians Government rations every month and we went to the house and stayed in the commissary the rest of the night. Mr. and Mrs. Tyler were sleeping up stairs and did not know that we were in the house until morning. We were wet and cold.

Mr. Gorham had a toll bridge across the river and we kept that for about two years.

One time two squaws and a buck came and wanted chewing gum. I did not have any and they looked the place over, under the chairs, and tables and in the cupboards. When they could not find any they took hold of me and jerked me around quite roughly. It almost frightened me to death. All Indians carried knives either in their belts or stuck in scabbards some place. They used these knives to skin horses or dead cattle. I have seen Indians skin a dead horse.

My brother had been hunting one time and had gone farther than he had intended. He was tired and wanted food. He came to an Indian camp and he smelled

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meat cooking. The thought of it made him sick and and he went on home without food.

My father's place was in the black jacks and we had to clear up the land in order to raise anything. We had lots of pie melons and sorghum and we bought beans, corn meal and some dried fruit.

Mr. Lowman got a job on the railroad and I kept the toll bridge for about two years. Then the bridge went out with a flood and a Mr. Cutwright had a ferry boat to take travelers across the river.

Some settlers would go to Kingfisher to work during the wheat harvest and would make enough to help keep the family most of the winter.