

McCLUNG, WALTER F.

INTERVIEW

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

McCLUNG, WALTER F.**INTERVIEW.****10525.**Field Worker's name Clara A. Richard.This report made on (date) April 11, 1938.1. Name Walter F. McClung.2. Post Office Address Blackwell, Oklahoma.3. Residence address (or location) 211 3rd Street.4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 21 Year 1874.5. Place of birth Winfield, Kansas.His father was a Kansas and Oklahoma Pioneer.6. Name of Father Kyle McClung. Place of birth West Virginia.Other information about father An Undersheriff in Kansas.7. Name of Mother Billa Emerick. Place of birth Ohio.Other information about mother A school teacher in Ohio,Missouri and Kansas.

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 _____

In the early days of Kansas Mr. Kyle McClung hunted buffalo for their hides, selling them at Emporia, Kansas. He also hunted and fished in Oklahoma, when it was called the Cherokee Outlet.

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Clara A. Richard,
Investigator,
Apr. 11, 1938.

Interview With Walter F. McClung,
Blackwell, Oklahoma.

Walter F. McClung's father, Kyle McClung, filed on 160 acres of land, three miles west of Winfield, Kansas, in 1869. His mother filed on 160 acres of the Government land, eight miles west of the same town of Winfield, Kansas. At that time, there was only one grocery store and a few dwellings in Winfield. At the time of the filing, his mother was then Miss Rilla Emerick.

After each of them had proved up on their land, they were married, and set up housekeeping on Mrs. McClung's farm; making their home in Cowley County until the Strip opened September 16, 1893. Having sold their land years before, Mr. McClung made the run and took a quarter section just eight miles west of the present city of Ponca City on the Chikaskia River, in Township 26 North Range ¹ East, living there until 1902. They moved to Lawton, Oklahoma, and made that their home until his death. Their first home in the Cherokee Strip was a two-room shanty.

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In making the race for a homestead, Mr. Kyle McClung drove a team hitched to a spring wagon, leaving the Kansas line when the United States soldiers fired the gun on the dot of twelve. He ran due south and had no trouble landing on this quarter section 55 minutes later. His son, Walter, followed with a fine team of work horses hitched to a heavy farm wagon, loaded with food and forage for man and beast. A barrel of water, a sod plow, a pump and other tools, and a tent also were loaded in the wagon. He arrived on the land at five o'clock in the evening.

They immediately began improvements by setting up the tent and driving the pump in the Chikaskia River bed, which was dry with the exception of a few holes of water up and down the bed of the river.

Their neighboring farm friends came from far and near to get some of this life-giving-fluid, which was needed so badly by man and beast, and which was so scarce. These new friends were welcome to all the water they wanted. This year of 1893 was as dry a year as Oklahoma has ever experienced.

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In the early fall, Mr. McClung hauled lumber enough from Winfield, Kansas, to build a two-room shack which was their living quarters for quite some time; later, they built a comfortable farm home.

In July, before the Strip opened in September, Mr. Kyle McClung, together with the sons of Mr. Garrett C. Brewer, the agent of the Tonkawa Indians, namely, Henry, Tom and Morris Brewer, cut and put up prairie hay near the agency, which was permitted by the Government. They cut and stacked approximately two hundred tons. The hay was sold to all new comers who came to buy. The second year in the Strip Mr. McClung took most of his stock to Kansas to winter.

In the early days at the Agency, a colorful old Indian woman, called Elsie, of the Tonkawa tribe, would trade any thing she possessed to the son, Walter McClung, for tobacco. That which she traded was anything she happened to have with her, including arrowheads, buck skins, knives, beads, or moccasins. Such was her desire for tobacco.