

NEWMAN, LUELLA

INTERVIEW

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

NEWMAN, LUELLA (MRS.)

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Field Worker's name Hazel B. Greene

This report made on (date) May 22, 1937 1937

1. Name Mrs. Luella Newman

2. Post Office Address Hugo, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 521 North F. St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 20 Year 1892

5. Place of birth Daisy, Arkansas

6. Name of Father Alvin Fugh Place of birth Arkansas

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Eliza Jane Fry Place of birth Washington

Other information about mother Both buried in the cemetery at

Huse, Oklahoma

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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Interview with Mrs. Luella Newman
Hugo, Oklahoma, Choctaw County

Building a new town, "Pughtown."

There were four families of us Pughs, and we had four wagons to each family. There were about thirty-five or forty of us. There were nine in my father's family, then we had some extra drivers, young men, who were single, and located there with us.

We had all lived around Daley, Arkansas, in Pike County, and were tired of that country. We decided to come over into the Indian Territory. So we loaded up and pulled out. It took us about a week of traveling before we found the spot that just exactly suited us, between Billy Creek and Kiamichi River, and in between the Winding Stair and Kiamichi Mountains. It looked like the ideal spot to our parents, so there they stopped. There was plenty of game and fish, also everything that it took to build a home.

The men folks put up log houses, with clapboard roofs, puncheon floors, home made doors, tables and bench-

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es. Our bedsteads were made by boring holes in the walls and inserting the whittled ends of saplings in the holes. Two saplings at the head and two at the foot, for the bedsteads, no bed posts. The slats were split out of the trees and laid lengthwise from end to end. Our mattresses were made of corn shucks stripped up to make them softer. Some of the families made a bed tick of tow sacks and filled them with oak leaves. We had gotten there in winter, in time to begin a crop, so there was no grass to pull and fill our mattresses. It was all gone. We all had feather beds and feather pillows. So our beds were quite comfortable.

Our chimneys were of the "stick and dirt" variety. We made a frame work of wood split from a good hard tree, then filled in with "mud cats", made of hay, straw or grass, rolled in clay till about the size of a quart jar and longer.

It was sixty miles from Pughtown to Mena, Arkansas, but that was where we went to town, once each year. We took our cotton to town, and bought our supply of sugar,

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flour, coffee, salt, soda, pepper and a very few other commodities. Other necessities we raised or did without.

There were lots of berries, huckleberries, dew-berries, blackberries, gooseberries, and some wild strawberries, plums and grapes. We would buy pears each fall when we went to Mena with the cotton. We preserved those.

We planted orchards as soon as we moved there, but it was a long time before we had fruit. But when we did it was the best we ever ate, before or since. We dried everything that we could for food, but after we got to raising apples I remember we had a big brass kettle that held about five gallons which we hung on a crane used to make apple butter in. Stirring it with a wooden spoon was a constant and arm-breaking job until it was done. It was always put up in a stone crock or churn. We always made it so thick that we had to cut it out in slices. Our preserves too, were cooked down till they would keep in a crock. We had only a few jars that we had brought over from Arkansas with us, in which to can fruit, and it was many years

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before we had a store there that sold fruit jars.

We always had plenty of wild honey which we found in the trees. We bought our coffee green, roasted and ground it ourselves. When we got prosperous we started buying it in paper bags and could get prizes for coupons or signatures cut from the sides of the bags, especially Arbuckle's. After about ten years Bill Easter started bringing snuff, tobacco, shoe strings, soda, coal oil, lamp wicks, and a few simple necessities, which he traded to us for eggs. Then he'd take the eggs to town. That way he started what proved to be a good store.

Mother was fourteen and father was fifteen when they were married. Mother had a good education and all that we learned for the first several years was what she taught us. However she had her hands pretty full, because there were eight of us.

I was about eight years old when we came to the Indian Territory, and settled what was called "Pughtown", because every family there, except those drivers, were named Pugh. After about six or seven years some man who

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had moved in to the community knew enough to teach school, so a school was made up. An old dwelling house was used for a school building. Log, of course. It was a subscription school and each pupil paid at the rate of ten cents per day.

Pughtown was what is now Muse, Oklahoma, right at Pine Valley. We didn't have a post office for many years. We didn't need one. We had nobody to write to. All of our folks were there, as was also all of our business. Scott Carver was the first Post Master and the office was called Muse. We had no doctor for fifteen years. Nobody died for ten years.

The first sermon I ever heard, we went twelve miles to hear. I was twelve years old. We were all barefooted and wore white "slat" bonnets. These bonnets made of just two thicknesses of the cloth and stitched across at regular spaces, so as to slip strips of card board in between the cloth to provide stiffening, instead of them being padded and starched. The meeting was held under a gin shed. We sat around just wherever

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we could, on a block of wood here or a big rock there. Some of the men "hunkered" down upon their heels. The most of the children were clinging to their mother's skirts and trying to hide behind them.

We made everything we used, almost. Boards to cover the houses, palings and rails for fences, and as I said before our houses and chimneys.

I've seen my father bring in tow sacks full of game, turkeys, ducks, squirrel and fish. If there was more than one family needing it, it was divided around. That way every family kept fresh meat. If a deer was killed sometimes it was barbecued. That way it would last several days. If we had fresh pork at the same time, we mixed pork and venison half and half for sausage, another delicious dish.

The feather of the wild fowl were used for pillows. However, we had tame ducks and geese, which we picked regularly. We children always had to catch them but they never let us pick one, so one day we caught an old rooster, took him out behind the smoke house and picked

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him clean.

The first bananas I ever saw I thought they were paw-paws.

Wolves were so numerous and bold that they would come up in the yard like dogs and attempt to take food from the hands of the children. We smaller children thought they were dogs. The men had to go on drives and kill them out, they were so numerous. Later they took the ears some place to claim a bounty on them. To Poteau, I believe.

Some times we made chair bottoms of deer hides, or tanned them to make shoe strings and strings for just any purpose.

Our cabins were almost invariably just one room, unless the family was extra large. We cooked, ate and slept in the one room, and there were, finally, nine of us children.

After about ten years a girl, cousin of mine, died. Her burial started the cemetery at Muse. Now it is a big one.

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We made our own syrup, of sorghum, and maple. We tapped the maple trees, and made maple syrup and sugar by boiling down the sap to the proper consistency for syrup or sugar.

Our windows were of slabs hewn out of logs and hung on hinges of deer hide and they opened outward.