



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

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NEELEY, RACHEL.

INTERVIEW.

9013

Field Worker's name Ira B. Lankford

This report made on (date) October 27 1937

1. Name Rachel Neeley

2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) East Hill Addition

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 10 Year 1881

5. Place of birth Archer County, Texas

6. Name of Father Bill Neeley Place of birth Ft. Smith,  
Arkansas

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Margaret White Place of birth Missouri

Other information about mother Housewife

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 4.

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Interview with Rachel Neeley,  
East Hill Addition, Cordell, Oklahoma.

We came from Wichita County, Texas, October, 1889. We brought two wagons loaded with household furniture and were on the road five days. Settled on a farm, one mile west and a half south of Cordell near Center Point School.

We lived in a sod house, our chicken house was also of sod and a crib was made of poles.

The first year my father and we children went to Duncan to pick cotton. The second year was 1890, we made a fair crop of cotton, cane and corn. Markets were at Duncan, Indian Territory, and Vernon, Texas. We sold our cotton for 5 and 9 cents per pound.

It was very cold in the winter time and we milked nine cows and took care of them, besides the horses and hogs.

In 1891, my father went to Vernon, Texas, to work in the harvest. He brought our clothes, food and materials back with him. Our dresses were gingham and heavy snirting.

March 4, 1899, the biggest prairie fire and sand storm came. We plowed around our dugout, chicken house, crib and feed stacks.

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After I was married, we lived one mile and a half west of Cordell. My husband worked at the gin. I took care of the first crop we made. My husband hired a man to break the sod and while he was doing this I sharpened a stick, punched holes in the ground and dropped the cotton seed into the holes and stepped on it to cover the seed. I could tie my baby on the bed and leave her for two hours at a time and never see her while I was working in the field.

Our hog pens were dug into the banks of the creek and slats put in the front of them and I carried water for eleven head of hogs every morning and night.

We would dig a hole in the ground, put poles in the hole, drop our turnips, beets and potatoes in the hole, cover with straw then with sod. We put beans and okra on a string, put our plums in a keg and weighted the top. We canned berries in bottles and sealed the bottles with sealing wax. We parched wheat for coffee, our corn bread and cereal were made out of kaffir corn. We would get 5 cents a dozen for eggs and 5 cents a pound for butter.

Crowds would gather and have singings. I went to one candy breaking, also to <sup>a</sup> big dialogue. Bugford and



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come and quiet the Indians..

There were also several saloons during this old period but I have never seen as many drunks as I have today.

I have seen new Cordell when there was only one house and saw old Cordell burn and new Cordell rebuilt. Cordell burnt in about 1900.

My first writing ink was indigo and my husband gathered little balls off of trees that had blue water in them and he used the water for ink.

In making our first beds we used to burrow holes back in the walls of the dugout and put large poles in the holes, then lay smaller poles on the larger ones and put the ticks on the small poles.

We raised a family of ten children, enduring all the hardships of those early days and we are now living in a dugout, located in the East Hill Addition of new Cordell.