

NEELEY, ALICE

INTERVIEW

9648.

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

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INTERVIEW.

#9649

Field Worker's name Ida B. Lankford,

This report made on (date) January 11, 1938

1. Name Mrs. Alice Neeley,

2. Post Office Address Cordell, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) West of the old Christian College,

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 27 Year 1884

5. Place of birth Wise County, Texas.

6. Name of Father W. W. Neeley Place of birth Indian Territory
Chickasaw Nation.

Other information about father Lawyer and preacher.

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 Six.

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Ida B. Lankford,
Investigator.
January 11, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Alice Neeley,
Cordell, Oklahoma.

I came to Cordell, Oklahoma Territory, from Wichita Falls, Texas, September 19, 1892. We crossed the Red River and came with two covered wagons and were ten days on the road. We were in one sandstorm when we could hardly see where to go.

We filed on land one mile west and one-half mile south of the present town of Cordell. We built a half dugout and a one room log cabin. We also dug a well on our place and the water was so hard that we could hardly use it.

In planting we used two old sod walking plows and a team of horses. We walked and broke our land. We sodded fifty acres of land and put it in corn, cotton, and sorghum cane. We would sell our corn for 20¢ a bushel and our cotton for 5¢ a pound after it was ginned.

The men would freight from El Reno to get our groceries and dry goods. We did not have many clothes, we had three school dresses and we also wore those dresses to church and other entertainments; they were made of calico and Father

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paid 5¢ a yard for the material.

We burned green cottonwood poles and dried cow chips and after we made a crop we would burn corn; we had a fireplace and it was very dangerous for there were no bricks around it. The fireplace was just made of dirt.

The fleas were so bad at times that we could not live in our dugout so we had to move our beds into the log cabin. I have seen my legs black with fleas. We had many mad cats, and rattlesnakes.

I had to herd cattle for three years and I rode in a man's saddle or bareback. I could ride most any kind of a horse whether it was tame or whether it never had been broken to ride.

We had biscuits once a week and that was on Sunday morning for breakfast and sometimes we would have them for Sunday dinner.

I remember many times I have had to shell corn, then go to the mill to have the corn ground. I would go about twenty miles to a mill on horseback with a big sack of

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shelled corn thrown on the horse behind me; if the wind didn't blow the windmill would not turn and would not grind the corn and I would be gone for two or three days and sometimes for a week before my turn would come.

We had hard times but happy ones. We had church in dugouts built up with sod and our benches were made of cottonwood poles. We would meet on Wednesday night and have our prayer meeting and on Friday night we had our social meeting and entertainments; on Sunday and Sunday nights we had church; we really enjoyed all these meetings and we had school in the same place and a teacher could teach with a Seventh Grade education.

My father went to school with me; he would go two months of the three months of the school term; he did this for three years and he got a good education.

My father was a lawyer here in Cordell for a long time; he was Justice of the Peace, the first one that Cordell ever had. He tried the people who were in shooting scrapes and tried the Indians for stealing.

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I well remember when the Indians got on the war-path and there were twenty-one families who had to hide in Center Point Schoolhouse at night till the soldiers could come from Fort Sill to quiet the Indians. The white men and Indians got into trouble. The white men were stealing the Indians' wood and posts. The Indians got on the warpath and would have "cleaned up" the white men if it had not been for the soldiers from Fort Sill.

The old gray Loper wolves would chase me for miles when I was on horseback and I would certainly be scared.

I remember going to a big Indian dance and barbecue. I remember the Indians would come and camp around our place; they would put up their tepees. Father would sell them beef and chickens. The Indians were our friends.

We could not wash clothes in the "gyp" water so we would load our wagon with our tubs and wash tubs and pots. We would go four miles to a spring and do our washing, then we would dry our clothes on brush and sometimes the

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spring would be so muddy that we would have to clean it out, then wait until the water would run off. It would take us all day to do our washing.

In 1896 there came a big rain, almost a water spout, which washed our crops out and we had to leave here and go East to find work. We cut cord wood and picked cotton for our living. The winter of 1896 we stayed in the eastern part of Oklahoma and picked cotton with ice on the ground and after the cotton was picked we still cut cord wood until March, 1897. Then we came home to start another crop and that year we made a good crop. Also in the same year in the summer there came so many big rains that we could not get to town to get anything to eat so we lived on clabber milk and eggs for three weeks and many a time we would boil kaffir corn to eat.

Many times one would be riding across the prairie and the grass would be so high that a person would ride right over the top of a dugout, especially that was dug deep into the ground.

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Our chairs were made of cottonwood poles and our beds were made of larger cottonwood poles. Our bed clothes were made of goods sewed together and we called them our bed ticks; we would take a scythe blade and cut grass to fill the bed ticks.

We would have candy breakings in our home and a crowd would gather in our home and have a big time. We would take gallons of sorghum and make candy.