Finding a Home among the Red Hills:

Women and Homesteading in Western Oklahoma, 1900-1920

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THESIS APPROVAL

The abstract and thesis of Cheryl Chesebrough-Caffee for the Master of Arts in History was submitted to the graduate college on May 5, 2016, and approved by the undersigned committee.

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The Morrow Family

James Morrow (1865-1959)	**Lula Doss Hall** (1873-1956)
Sterling	1894-1991
Vivian Glee	1896-2001
Ophie H.	1899-1994
Lorra M.	1900-1981
Lou Rette	1902-1980
James Richard	1903-1993
Louis Doss	1905-1998
John Oran	1907-1998
Leyla Maye	1908-1998
Jesse Alois	1911-1914
Glenn Orville	1913-1984
Finis Linzey	1916-1989

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Introduction

A few years ago a friend from church, Linda Sheehan, inquired about my new career as a full-time student at the University of Central Oklahoma. Our conversation led us into a short discussion about my major in history and my interests in women of the American West. She mentioned that her husband's great-grandmother had written a diary about her life as a homesteader in western Oklahoma and wondered if I wanted to look at it. Thrilled at the prospect of reading one woman's experience in the sometimes harsh and unforgiving territory, we made an appointment to meet. Multiple changes had occurred politically, economically, and socially for the forty-sixth state in the first two decades of the twentieth century and I wondered how they affected a single family from the mother's perspective. I expected to hear about suffrage, WWI, the Great Depression, and WWII but found something very different. The manuscript, written by a woman named Lula Morrow, began with her move to Oklahoma by covered wagon and ended in her retirement years. She told a story about God, family, community, and the homestead with minor passing mentions of the political and economic events that I thought were so important in the lives of individuals.

When I first sat down with Linda to review the manuscript, the names of Lula's family members looked oddly familiar. I thought I knew this family but was not sure why until I spotted the names Lizzie and John Luther Caffee on the third page. Lizzie, Lula's twin sister, was my husband's great grandmother and John and Cora Hall (Lula and Lizzie's parents) were his great, great grandparents. According to Lula, the Caffees filed on a 160-acre farm not too far away from the Morrow's homestead and moved north permanently in 1903. I recognized the Hall names because the previous summer, Brent and I had spent a week researching his ancestral

roots in Kentucky. His great, great grandparents, John and Grizelle Hall, were some of the earliest settlers in Barren County in the early nineteenth century. John, Lula and Lizzie's two times great grandfather had received a bounty of Kentucky farmland for his Revolutionary war service. He became a wealthy, prominent judge and accumulated 1,800 acres of prime land in the middle of the state. He established a reputation as a fair judge and active member of the community and there was a multitude of information about him in the Barren County records. The Caffees had also moved to central Kentucky from Virginia to settle on their war bounty and became connected to the Halls by location, church membership, and marriage.

Linda's generosity not only introduced our husband's to their genetic connection but also added an amazing new story to their family trees. The two men do not share any physical characteristics and had no idea they were related but they do have the same kind and generous spirits of their great-grandmothers. Their mothers and fathers taught them to follow the same code of ethics that Lula and Lizzie had learned and passed on to their children; they based their lives on God, family, and community, in that order. Both husband's share an unwavering religious faith, intense love of family, and a sense of community spirit that implores them to offer assistance to those in need at every opportunity. They proudly represent their great grandmother's legacies as hard working, gentle, and exceptionally kind individuals.[1]

This work is based on the first twenty years of the Morrow's lives in Oklahoma through the lens of the family matriarch. It is a microhistorical project that examines the key items of importance to an Anglo, married, rural farmwoman from western Oklahoma and compares them to the larger scale political, economic, and social occurrences of her time. It is of unique

[1] Morrow, Lula D. Hall, "Grandma's Diary," Morrow Family Tree MS, authors possession, Edmond, OK, 1956, 1-3.

importance to the scholarship of women of the West because it provides a narrow focus on a particular group of women who have remained largely silent in Oklahoma's historical works. Lula Morrow gave these women a voice, which allowed me to reconstruct their lives within a larger framework. More importantly, most historians have researched female homesteaders from the nineteenth century, but not the twentieth. The Census Bureau had declared the frontier closed by 1890, but Oklahoma's late land openings provided a unique opportunity to view homesteading through a more modern lens that continued through the first few years of the twentieth century.

Homesteading married women have often been thought of as overworked and unhappy, but that depiction denies everything that they loved and enjoyed about their lives. They worked hard and often felt tired and worn down at the end of each day, but their accomplishments gave them great pride. They lived in a multi-faceted world on a farm where they were isolated and miles away from their neighbors. They had to circumnavigate social restraints on their economic abilities and overcome preconceived notions of their physical and mental capabilities. A homestead was more than a divided partnership where the husband farmed and the woman did everything else. Roles on the farm blurred and overlapped and the women who reported the most satisfaction and happiness had husbands who shared duties, respected their abilities, and worked with them as equal team members.

It is easy to romanticize the lives of the Morrows and their neighbors because there are many holes in the manuscripts and oral interviews that require occasional assumptions. People tell the stories they want us to hear, not necessarily the entire truth and memories are not always reliable. Lula's diary is based on her memory and she wrote what she wanted her children and grandchildren to hear. She may have left out important details in order to prevent someone else's

pain or of exposing her own or maybe she just forgot. If Lula were here today, I would ask her how she really felt about giving birth to twelve children, and if she ever resented her work on the farm, but she is not here. I did the best with what she gave me and choose to believe her when she said she loved the farm and found much happiness and self-satisfaction among the red hills of western Oklahoma. Forgive my occasional romantic indulgence and remember that the first two decades of the twentieth century was a time of change for women in our country. Power structure between genders and races began to change ever so slowly and subtly, even reaching the far western remote reaches of Oklahoma. Women gained the vote, they began to enter the commercial workplace in positions of importance, and found a voice outside the home.

I supplemented Lula Morrow's diary entries of the first decade with the WPA oral interviews in the *Indian-Pioneer Papers* and only selected the interviews of men and women who homesteaded in the western territory between 1895 and 1910, to stay true to the Morrow experience. Homesteaders eagerly shared their stories and provided an ample amount of material. Historical societies also gathered stories passed down through generations and I used those narratives to supplement the dialogue. Even though most of the physical things like their first homes built deep into the red dirt, their churches, and schools are gone, the lessons they passed on to their families have lingered and evolved through each new generation. The memories provided me with a mental picture that I hope I was able to capture and pass on to you, the reader.

In the second decade, Lula concentrated on improving the lives of her family, which also coincided with improvements of the new state government. Oklahoma was a brand new state in 1910, and its administrators worked diligently to establish consistency through the legislature, state administrators, and local governments. Lula's main concerns centered on the education and

the health of her family, and the Departments of Public Instruction and Public Health provided detailed reports that revealed frustration with their slow progress. Rural residents wanted change but also wanted independence and had great difficulty releasing control to the state government. Unable to persuade her neighbors to consolidate, Lula felt she had no choice but to leave the farm temporarily and move to Hammon with several of her children in order to provide them with the best education available.

Last, but not least, this is a paper about a very specific group of women and in order to avoid confusion for the reader, I would like to make it clear that if I refer to women in a generic manner, it is the married, Anglo, western Oklahoma homesteader that I am referring to. This fairly homogenous group of white farm women spent most of their time separated from the majority of the population. I cannot say that they were not affected by the larger population, but they were isolated on farms that were miles apart and created communities the way they wanted them to look. Lula made reference to the fact that they did not have fancy clothes and it did not matter because they all dressed alike. They spent little time worrying about what others thought of them. I also make several references to "masculine work," and in the context of this paper it is related specifically to farm work. I cannot define the term for other scholars who make reference to it in the historiography but for me it is any physical labor on the farm outside of the domestic role. It refers to, but is not limited to taking part in activities like fence building, planting, harvesting, and hauling supplies. Partnerships are defined as working relationships between men and women on the farm and power is not heavily discussed because it is a forgone conclusion that the Morrows lived within the same patriarchal society that governs us today. Men, especially white males, in the U.S. have existed at the top of the food chain since the inception of this country and they have made most of the laws, retaining control over the economy, the

government, and society. This work discusses the role of western Oklahoma homesteading women and their survival within this framework. It does not attempt to take apart any large overreaching social structure but merely show how these women circumnavigated the changing configuration of the 1900s and 1910s. This small group of women did not make any references to equality and I can only guess that either they did not need to talk about it or did not consider it to be a main concern. spouses. What this research shows is that the combination of the work created on the farm and the acceptance of leadership over home life led western Oklahoma's Anglo homesteading wives to develop independence, autonomy, and egalitarian marital relationships, which resulted in a profound influence on their children's futures and that of the new state of Oklahoma.

This is a study centered on one woman's experience homesteading in western Oklahoma, which is supplemented by the stories of her neighbors and her government. Lula never mentioned her Native American or African American neighbors but intersections between races occurred and I included them where appropriate. The importance of a microhistory is that it provides the knowledge of a very small story wrapped within the larger history in order to give voice to those who have been silent for too long. I offer you a small story of a family of fourteen who homesteaded in Oklahoma Territory at the turn of the century as seen through the eyes of the family matriarch, Lula Morrow.

Chapter 1

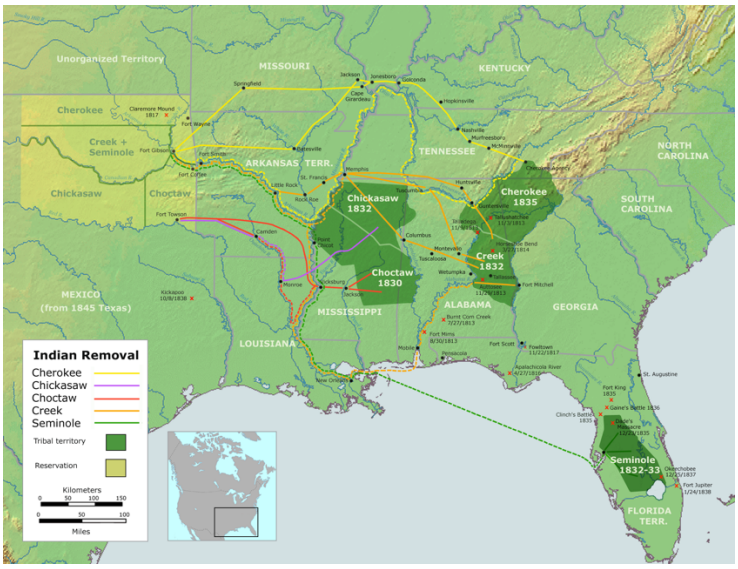
Frontier Women of the American Grasslands: Partnerships and Creating Communities

"The problem has been blindness, not inarticulateness."
John Mack Faragher

Lula and James Morrow came to Oklahoma in 1900, as part of the last wave of hopeful homesteaders settling on free land. Long before the Morrows arrived, the area known today as Oklahoma was part of a much larger territory designated as "Indian Country" in the early nineteenth century. Settlement of the U.S. is a long and detailed story involving Anglo conquest and movement over a vast frontier previously occupied by Native Americans who had settled and roamed the lands for centuries. The area known as the West was a vast frontier that stretched from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. The American government appropriated the land through several moves, which included the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the annexation of Texas in 1845, the diplomatic settlement of Oregon Territory in 1846, and the Mexican cession of the Southwest in 1848. Despite the new territory, Anglos also desired land in the East already settled by the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole, known as the Five Civilized Tribes. In 1830, the legislature passed the Indian Removal Act and gave the president the power to grant land west of the Mississippi River to Native Americans living in the East who would abandon their homelands and relocate west. Voluntary settlement began in 1828 and ended with

the last military forced removal known as the Trail of Tears in 1839, to the area known today as Oklahoma.[2]

Indian Removal 1830s



The federal government had promised an end to forced movement for the Five Civilized Tribes but in the midst of the Civil War, the Union legislature passed the Homestead Act of 1862, which opened the door to white settlement in the West and closed the door to the wandering of the Native Americans of the Plains. Federal law offered 270 million acres for settlement, allowing any adult citizen or intended citizen who had never borne arms against the government, to claim 160 acres as long as they made structural improvements and cultivated the property over a period of five years. Claimants could take early possession after six months by purchasing the land from the federal government at $1.25 per acre.

[2] "Milestones: 1801-1829 &1830-1860," U.S. Department of the State, Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/milestones/ (accessed March 1, 2016); Map taken from the The Eighth Dimension, http://the8thdimension.blogspot.com/2011_03_01_archive.html (accessed March 7, 2016).

To make room for the displaced Native Americans who lived on the plains, the federal government chose to punish all members of the Five Tribes living in Indian Territory for the sins of those members who joined the Confederacy. In 1865, officials told tribal leaders they had breached their treaties and would be required to renegotiate. This took place in 1866 with the Reconstruction Treaties, which forced the Five Tribes to sell large portions of their land in Indian Territory to make room for the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa and Apaches who were being displaced. In addition, the legislature amended the Homestead Act giving soldiers the option to deduct time served from the residence requirements, which further encouraged thousands to leave their homes and forge west.[3]

By the mid-1880s, free land had become scarce in the West, causing groups like David Payne and his Boomers, to place pressure on the federal government to open Indian Territory for settlement. The legislature responded to the pressure with the Dawes Act of 1887, which provided the president with the power to remove Native Americans from their reservations and assign them individual land allotments. The law not only opened the last door of free emigration to a new wave of farming hopefuls, but also moved Native Americans toward white cultural assimilation by forcing them into a sedentary, farming lifestyle. Federal officials divided the territory in half with the east side fully settled by the Five Tribes, and the west, Oklahoma Territory, opened to hopeful homesteaders exclusive of the assigned Native American allotments. Settled by land runs and lotteries, officials held the first land run in 1889 and the last in 1906. The Morrows settled in the far western reaches of the old Cheyenne/Arapaho

[3] W. David Baird and Danney Goble, *Oklahoma, A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 113-115, 142, 144-5, 153; Act of May 20, 1862 (Homestead Act), Public L. No. 37-64, Record Group 11, General Records of the United States Government, National Archives (1862); Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Oklahoma, A History of Five Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 175-6.

reservation, which had barely attracted 25,000 hopefuls in its land run of 1892, leaving several claims still available and prompting the last wave of settlement at the turn of the century.[4]

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Despite the fact that the land runs and lotteries included both men and women, the written histories and literature focused on men and ignored the impact made by women until the late 1950s. Churches, meeting halls, organizations, schools, and the behavior of subsequent generations all contained their influences, but their accounts found through diaries, memoirs, oral interviews, personal papers, and newspaper articles remained largely untouched. Much of this male dominated history resided in the social expectations of genders as outlined in periodicals and newspapers throughout the nineteenth century. These authors defined a separation of genders within the ideology of "True Womanhood," which designated women as the keepers of morality and the domestic sphere, leaving men in control of education, politics, and the economy. As

[4] Baird, *Oklahoma, A History*, 113-115, 129, 131, 142-6.

[5] "The Oklahoma Land Run," Oklahoma Historical Society, http://www.okhistory.org/kids/lrexhibit (accessed February 24, 2016).

keepers of history, men saw little need to include women in the mostly political narrative, which partially explains the long silence in the history books.[6]

In order to understand this delay in the historiography, it is important to take a very brief look at the silence of women in the nineteenth century, which begins with gender and its construction in Western society. It is important to note that today we acknowledge that gender and sex are not equivalent, and that physiological differences do not flow to social status and behavior. However, in eighteenth century North America, people lived in a gender stratified society in which men dominated as the keepers of society. The US was founded under the idea of political independence and freedom of religion, but that was only for white men. Education, property ownership, and business operations were all denied to married women who were mere property of their spouses. In the post-Revolutionary War environment it was thought by the country's leadership that women must be prepared to teach their sons the virtue of protecting the Republic and urged them to obtain an education. That evolved in the early nineteenth century to include a stringent moral code that bound women to the home and kept them away from the evil carnage experienced by their male partners in the economic and political world. Despite the difficulty of maintaining such a strict moral code, it provided women with a new sense of power by making them leaders over the home. Most middle and upper class women adhered to the doctrine willingly, assuming that this was their natural place based on their physiology. Men dominated naturally due their physical and mental strength and many women accepted the social structure as the natural order because that was what their parents taught them.[7]

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[6] Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1866), 152.

[7] Judith Lorber, "Night to Day: The Social Construction of Gender," in *Race, Class, and Gender in the United States: An Integrated Study*, Paula S. Rothenberg, ed. (New York: Worth Publishers, 2004), 56, 61-2; Jonathan Ned Katz, "The Invention of Heterosexuality," in *Race,*

Education would change this acceptance of social stratification but it did not occur until the twentieth century when the government made universal education mandatory and available to everyone. In the nineteenth century only young women from affluent families received an education if their fathers supported it. They might be tutored at home or sent to one of the few private academies available, while others taught themselves from the manuscripts at home. Books were a luxury for the poor and education was not mandatory nationwide until 1918. Poor families often put their children to work in factories or on the farm, leaving little time for education. Some of the leading philosophers and physicians of the century believed that it was unnatural for a female to be educated. Even when men agreed that education for women was useful to teach future sons of the nation and they gave women a place of importance over the home, men denied them the rights of citizenship.[8]

Elizabeth Fries Ellet emerged from the ideology of Republican Motherhood with a writing gift and offered Americans the first historical monograph written by a female and about early female settlers. *Pioneer Women of the West* (1852), focused on the movement that occurred during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Her research included diaries, memoirs, letters, and interviews of the women and their family members. She argued that the fifty-eight pioneers in her book had a "peculiar character" that they passed on to their offspring, making them a unique breed. Her women followed their husbands willingly into danger and had learned to defend themselves in a wild, uncharted territory, left alone while their husbands conducted

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Class, and Gender, 69; Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Revised Edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 10.

[8] National Women's History Museum, "Women's Changing Roles as Citizens of a New Republic," https://www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/education/1700s_2.htm (accessed March 1, 2016); Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood,"152; James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks, eds. *Multicultural Education Issues and Perspectives*, Seventh Edition (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2010), 139; 129.

business away from the homestead. One story involved Catherine Sevier, the wife of the first governor of Tennessee, who was always taken away from the home to attend to business. She refused, more often than not, to move to the safety of the nearby fort because she was capable of taking care of herself and the children and hated the disruption it had on their lives. Ellet described her as a woman of many talents who not only sewed the uniforms worn by her husband's men, but also handled a gun and a horse as well as any man. Many of the other women in the book shared similar stories and described by Ellet as selfless supporters, brave, and of intense Christian faith. They endured great emotional pain and physical difficulty on the frontier and survived the deaths of multiple family members to Indian attack but still remained in wilds on the other side of the Appalachians. Ellet argued they had developed a "masculine intellect" that made them independent and in love with the wild, untamed surroundings.[9]

Pioneer Women of the West was a unique piece of work for the 1850s that looked at social history, rather than the popular political histories of the century. It supported the gender notions that separated men and women by physical strength and emotional frailty. If a woman liked the frontier and survived the wilds she was identified as masculine playing into the ideology of the time rather than finding men and women as equal. Remaining works about frontier women of the nineteenth century centered on the salacious tales of Indian attack and captivity, characterizing women as helpless, but unwavering victims who held tightly to their virtue and piety. In 1851, a group of Western Yavapai (identified as Apaches by the victim) captured Olive Ann Oatman and a younger sister Mary Ann (who died in captivity) after leaving

[9] Ellet, Elizabeth Fries. *Pioneer Women of the West* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1856), 1-3,10-13, 27-8, 35-40, 408, 415; "Portraits of American Women Writers, Elizabeth Fries Ellet," The Library Company of Philadelphia, http://www.librarycompany.org/women /portraits/ellet.htm (accessed February 22, 2016).

the rest of the family for dead. Oatman employed former preacher, R. B. Stratton, to write her story, which has been highly criticized as a glamorized tale lacking much truth. Somehow Oatman managed to maintain her morality and her devotion to Christianity despite her complete immersion in the tribe after four years in captivity, and barely speaking English upon her rescue. Modern historians Brian McGinty and Margot Mifflin disputed the fact that Oatman claimed she never had sex with tribal members, and that she strictly maintained her Christian values but in her defense, a return to Anglo society most likely prompted her to maintain an extremely high moral standard rather than risk societal rejection. The Mojave had tattooed her face, which not only made her an oddity but also reduced her opportunities for a marriage partner and further solidified her insistence that she remained a virgin in captivity. Social customs probably had everything to do with Oatman's decision not to include certain things in the book because her story, as it was written, also allowed her to make a living on the speaking circuit. She offered audiences what they wanted to hear, whether true or not, and left any questions to future historians to argue over whether it was or was not fiction.[10]

In a period known today as the "first wave of feminism," the women of the nineteenth century left their imprints on society in many other ways through abolition, suffrage, temperance, social reform, and general equal rights through writings in periodicals and newspapers, speeches, and secret underground movements, but few history books contained their stories in the first half of the following century. Sarah Josepha Hale held the position of editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* until 1877, which society hailed as one of the most influential women's magazine of its time.

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[10] R. B. Stratton, *Captivity of the Oatman Girls: Being an Interesting Narrative of Life Among the Apache and Mohave Indians* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1858), 134, 240-6, 250-69; Brian McGinty*, The Oatman Massacre: A Tale of Desert Captivity and Survival* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 100; Margot Mifflin, *The Blue Tattoo, The Life of Olive Oatman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), 72-4.

Former slave Sojourner Truth spent decades on the national speaking circuit fighting for abolition and women's rights and Harriet Tubman risked her life daily with her work in the Underground Railroad. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucy Stone fought tirelessly for female suffrage through lobbying, writing, and speaking. Stone became the first female college graduate from the state of Massachusetts in 1847, and advocated equal rights by helping to organize the first National Women's Convention. Her work with the *Woman's Journal* helped turn the woman's movement into a respectable cause.[11]

Despite opening the public conversation toward more independence and opportunity for women, several historians have theorized that in the first wave of feminism, female leaders perpetuated the ideology of "True Womanhood" by embracing their moral superiority, despite the fact that it denied them most rights of citizenship. It defined women as pure, pious, submissive, and domestic and gave them dignity, but it also required self-denial and self-sacrifice. Anyone who raised her voice too loudly, risked social condemnation. Jill Ker Conway argued that despite their outspokenness and lasting imprints on society, most of the leading activists encouraged the maintenance of feminine virtues by seeking opportunities within appropriately suited gender roles, which ultimately continued the adherence to domesticity. However, Barbara Welter pointed out that the ideology of "True Womanhood" provided wives and mothers with reign over morality and that even though the male dominated society designed it to keep women in "their place," its very nature inevitably led to its self-destruction. Men were weak and sensual creatures who granted superiority and power to their women at home, which

[11] "Sarah J. Hale," "Sojourner Truth," "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," "Susan B. Anthony," "Lucy Stone," The National Women's History Museum. https://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/sarah-hale/ (accessed February 19, 2016); Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?" (lecture, Women's Convention, Akron, Ohio, December 1851).

provided the seeds of destruction by giving women a growing sense of power and independence. Women eventually concluded that if they were" truly a little less than the angels," taking part in running the world was theirs for the taking since men had made such a mess of things.[12]

Welter correctly identified the reason for the destruction of the ideology of "True Womanhood" but women remained tied to the domestic sphere and men maintained their control of the economic and political sectors through the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. Between 1862 and 1890, the white man had subdued the remaining Native Americans and settled the American West. The federal Census Bureau declared the frontier closed in 1890, with a few remaining pockets of unsettled land, and in 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner presented a paper to the American Historical Association arguing that the existence of free land, continuous recession, and settlement not only explained the development of the U.S. but that it also signaled the end of the first period in American history. Each new boundary had promoted a unique brand of individualism and democracy, and with each movement the chains of past customs disappeared making America synonymous with unlimited possibility. The biggest problem with the thesis as pointed out by Glenda Riley in the *Female Frontier* (1988), is that it completely ignored women, making the part they played in the shaping of history, insignificant. As a professor of Harvard, Turner mentored a future generation of male historians who supported the

[12] Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood," 132, 156; Jill Conway, "Women Reformers and American Culture 1870-1930," *Journal of Social History* 5 (Winter 1971-2), 174; Molly Ladd-Taylor and Lauri Umansky, "Bad Mothers," in Making Sense of Women's Lives: An Introduction to Women's Studies, Michelle Plott and Lauri Umansky, eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 129-30.

romantic notion of exceptionalism, which inherently created a muted past of unspoken racism and Anglo male domination.[13]

At the turn of the twentieth century and through the 1950s, a very small number of historians and literary writers wrote about frontier women but portrayed them as something of a mystery. They were innocent and vulnerable to aggression, overworked and exhausted, lonely without family, and miles from their nearest neighbors, but they were also tough, adaptable, and becoming all too familiar with masculine work on the homestead. A sociology student from the University of Oklahoma, Mabel Bridgewater, studied insanity among the women of Oklahoma in 1911, and discovered that 70 percent of the insane, confined within the Norman Insane Asylum, suffered breakdowns from the isolation and extreme working conditions associated with the rural living. Of the 500 women within the facility, 197 were housewives. One in particular had been married fifteen years, took care of her nine children, completed all the housework, milked ten to fifteen cows, made butter to sell, cared for the garden, and a number of turkeys, pigs, and chickens. She finally broke from the exhaustion requiring respite at the institution. This finding certainly made it appear that rural life offered little reprieve but the 197 housewives represented such a small sampling of the total population that it hardly seemed fair to assume all rural housewives disliked their circumstances and needed time in a mental institution. In 1935, Lida Barr studied Southern Plains pioneer women and argued that most Oklahoma female homesteaders achieved contentment on the farm only because they lacked knowledge of the freedom of women in urban environments. She observed women as victims, unwillingly dragged from their homes and families in the East, kept too busy with work to become happy or

[13] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1921), 1-4, 36-38, 369; Glenda Riley, *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 1.

appreciative. They led lonely, monotonous lives and tamed the region with their high morals and social standards but lived a tragic existence, shoved deep into the shadows of society.[14]

This tragic view continued until Dee Brown broke ground with *Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old West* (1958). He argued that the sunbonnet myth created by Emerson Hough in his fictional classic, *The Covered Wagon* (1922), which described women as overworked, shattered, and exhausted was nothing more than a myth. The mostly middle class, white women were gentle and pious with a fierce determination. He described morally superior individuals who civilized and tamed the Wild West, casting off the eastern notions of femininity and achieving independence with a newfound freedom that they wore like a banner. Brown's women rebelled against standard ideologies and showed more endurance and intelligence than their male counterparts who demonstrated an inability to establish enlightened and refined behavior without their moral rivals. Men created chaos in the West and women cleaned up the mess through hard work determination, and their trust in God. The problem with Brown's theory was that some of his examples were contradictory to his own research and he used a strange mixture of women. Carrie Nation, six feet in height and 180 pounds, was hardly gentle as she traveled around Oklahoma and Kansas smashing saloons in her fight for temperance, and Elizabeth Custer, the wife of Indian fighter General George Custer, was more a camp follower than a civilizer and tamer of the American West. The actress, Lotta Crabtree, went west with her parents, but returned to the East to follow her acting career within twelve years, making it difficult to classify her as a tamer of the West. In addition, his general portrayal of men as drunken fools, lacking morality without a woman's whip, seems a bit harsh. It is true that many men went west in

[14] Lida Barr, "Women on the Southern Plains Frontier," B.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1935, 10, 71-3; Mabel Bridgewater, "Insanity Among the Women of Oklahoma," B. A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1911, 10-12.

search of riches, and that mining towns required civilizing but most men who homesteaded, moved with entire families and made sincere contributions to the creation of a civilized society in the American West. Despite the interesting choice of Brown's subjects and a personal disagreement of his assessment, his thesis provided an early contribution to a new field exploring women's history and offered a basis upon which others could build.[15]

In the following year, Edward Everett Dale (1879-1972), a student of Turner and proponent of the frontier thesis, introduced *Frontier Ways: Sketches of Life in the Old West* (1959) and included women in the western narrative. As a professor of history at the University of Oklahoma and an author of numerous books on the Southwest, with a focus on Oklahoma history, he portrayed rural wives as adaptable eastern transplants who kept strictly to their domestic duties and happily accepted their role as helpmates. He described creative, super humans able to read novels during dinner preparation and creating wonderful meals with few ingredients. His idealistic picture of separate spheres, with no overlap, subscribed to the notion that wives had plenty of free time to pursue individual interests. In reality, women filled many masculine roles on a homestead and had very little free time, if any. His misunderstanding of the role of women in the homestead is explained by the fact that he lost his mother at a young age, leaving him without a motherly role model.[16]

In the following decade, the New Left radical, influenced by Marxism, rose from Cold War ideology and challenged the consensus histories written through the 1950s. This group of historians confronted capitalism, diplomatic history, and discrimination, by introducing social

[15] Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old West* (New York: Putnam, 1958), 11, 17, 252, 256, 292, 295.

[16] Edward Everett Dale, *Frontier Ways: Sketches of Life in the Old West* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), 52, 61, 120.

and microhistory as new methodologies. In 1963, Betty Friedan introduced *The Feminine Mystique*, encouraging the unhappy suburban housewife to seek self-fulfillment, demand opportunity, and throw off her patriarchal chains. Women demanded equality of the sexes and the numbers obtaining Bachelor degrees quadrupled between 1950 and 1975. It had been a long road from the previous ignorant assessments about women in the late nineteenth century. In 1873 Dr. Edward Clarke stated publicly that women could not study and think without physical injury in the form of neuralgia, uterine disease, hysteria, and other derangements of the nervous system, and twenty years later Henry Adams complained about the inclusion of a woman on the yearly meeting roster of the American Historical Association. In the 1960s, female historians began to demand their rightful place among their peers and placed a new emphasis on women's history, which resulted in a respected academic discipline of study in the 1970s, initiated by Gerda Lerner who legitimized women's history with the first graduate program in the subject at Sarah Lawrence College.[17]

The addition of women's history programs provided multiple opportunities for historians to present brand new works and they wasted little time uncovering diaries, and other accounts of women's experiences, especially on the American West. Christine Stansell's research of nineteenth century female pioneers found that the frontier destroyed the important values and

[17] Statista, The Statistics Portal, http://www.statista.com/statistics/185157/number-of-bachelor-degrees-by-gender-since-1950/, (accessed April 24, 2014). In 1950, the statistics showed a little over 103,000 females obtaining Bachelor degrees; 138,000 in 1960; 341,000 in 1970 and 418,000 in 1975; William Grimes, "Gerda Lerner, a Feminist and Historian Dies, at 92," *New York Times*, January 3, 2013; St. Lawrence County Branch of AAUW, "Early College of Women," Women of Courage Profiles, http://www.northnet.org/stlawrenceaauw/college.htm (accessed April 10, 2014), 1-2; Henry Adams called women's brains "poor little, hard, thin, wiry, one stringed instruments. Fifty to sixty percent of the first generation of college women did not marry or significantly delayed marriage and the mother of Eleanor Roosevelt complained when her granddaughter enrolled in college because "Girls who went to college were apt to be old maids."

traditions of wives who lost their femininity by taking on masculine work for which they received no recognition. In the early years, the majority population of men inhabited the West and women were too few in numbers to make an impact. The frontier destroyed the things that women held dear and Lillian Schlissel agreed also finding that moving to the West had very little effect on the men but completely disrupted women's lives. Husband's failed to solicit input from their wives on the decision to move, which resulted in a dislocation in work and social expectations. Most had no choice but to remain valiant, hiding their feelings of resentment. Similar to Stansell, Julie Roy Jeffrey's *Frontier Women* (1979) demonstrated that pioneer life forced wives into masculine activities, which undermined their concepts of womanhood. Wives silently suffered the additional work created on the homestead and hid their true feelings. They had no choice but to cling to domesticity and despite her own desires to find them breaking free from the chains of sexist domination, Jeffrey said the exact opposite occurred.[18]

This same theme of unhappy women forced into physical labor and stripped of their comfortable lives continued continued to reign through the 1970s. John Mack Faragher's *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (1979) published in the same year as Jeffrey's monograph, found that men worked much less than women whose work cut them off from socializing, and they received very little support or sympathy from their partners. Glenda Riley critiqued his work finding his model weak, having comprised material strictly from southern patriarchal whites and suggested that the lives of women were neither as "bleak or bright" as he presented them. Her own comparative work argued that gender dictated women's lives, not regions, and society

[18] Christine Stansell, "Women on the Great Plains, 1865-1890," *Women's Studies* 4 (Spring 1976), 88-9, 90, 96; Lillian Schlissel, "Mothers and Daughters on the Western Frontier," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 3 (Summer 1978): 29-30; Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women, The Trans-Mississippi West 1840-1880* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), xv, 3, 198.

forced them into domesticity even when they tried to break away. Perhaps women did experience dislocation and continued domesticity, but it is hard to believe that some type of independence failed to emerge from these new experiences and many scholars agreed in the following decade.[19]

Lula Morrow hardly sounded like a subservient woman chained to domesticity in her memoir. She loved her children, loved caring for them and teaching them, and took pride in their many accomplishments. She also never complained about her domestic or farm work and neither did many of the western Oklahoma homesteading women interviewed by the WPA in the 1930s. They boasted of their abilities to maintain the home and farm when their husbands traveled for work and most maintained equal partnerships despite the distribution of duties. The Morrows made the decision to move north as a couple, but Lula, not James, wrote to their preacher friend in Texas and asked him to move north and plant a church in their community. She helped James organize the construction of a primary school building but she alone moved to town twice with her children, in order to provide the best education possible for them. Despite her attachment to domesticity, she took on masculine work when needed and shared in the economic success with her eggs, chickens, butter, and extra garden produce.[20]

Susan Armitage made it clear in her work that the effect of stereotyping the frontier female as uncomfortable, unhappy, or driven to insanity, denied the reality of their daily lives. The acceptance of subjugation supported previous, fallacious theories that the feminine gender did not contribute to society in any significant capacity. Pioneering required significant overlap

[19] John Mack Faragher, *Women and Men on the Overland Trail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 280; Riley, *The Female Frontier,* 196-97; Glenda Riley, Book Review of *Women and Men on the Overland Trail*, *Indiana Magazine of History* 76 (June 1980), 138-9.

[20] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 2.

of spousal duties for women who added cutting wood, carrying water, growing food in gardens, acting as farmhands, and caring for the stock to their domestic roles. The frontier wives of Sheryl Patterson-Black singlehandedly tended the farm while their husbands worked for wages elsewhere and even though Jeffrey failed to find women liberated from domestic life, she found them strong and courageous. Patterns uncovered by Lillian Schlissel suggested a high order of dislocation in work roles and social expectations, but she also found first generation pioneers to be sharp witted and determined. Her work showed greater independence and strength instilled in the second generation as did Ellet in 1852.[21]

In 1980, these new ideas prompted Joan Jensen and Darlis Miller to challenge their peers to revisit the gentle tamer thesis produced by Brown, and to change the focus of historical studies from individuals to cultures and relationships. They provided suggestions in the areas of migration west; demography on rural and urban frontier; relations among women of different cultures; politics; and occupations, which prompted a cornucopia of papers and books that provided more accurate representations of the multiple, cultural footprints of women who came to the American West. The pair also suggested demographic studies to disprove previous assumptions that women were few in numbers, making too small an impact in the West to warrant any serious studies. They shared figures published by Jack Eblen a decade earlier that showed that more than 25 percent of the adult males were single 1840-1860, and even though early Colorado and California numbers showed a 23:1 ratio of men to women during these two decades, by 1870 this ratio had changed to 2:1. Assumptions about fertility rates, marital age,

[21] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1-3; Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, *The Women's West* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma, 1987), 12-14; Sheryl Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontiers," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 3 (Summer 1976): 73; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans-Mississippi West*, 3; Schlissel, "Mothers and Daughters," 29.

location of settlement, and relationships among women of different cultures were severely lacking based on these figures and the encouragement of Jensen and Miller created an immediate response from the historical scholarship.[22]

Sandra Myers produced one of the earliest monographs, after the challenge, with *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience 1800-1915* (1982). She offered a methodology that utilized women's reminiscences, diaries, and letters and argued that women on the frontier had the same opportunities as men but they failed to liberate themselves from the social constrictions of sexism. Instead, they adopted flexible attitudes, modified social norms, and experimented with new behavior patterns within their separate sphere. Some embraced their changes with enthusiasm while others transformed reluctantly. Despite the public perception of existing norms, women on the frontier were different than their eastern sisters, and had developed some political and economic independence.[23]

In addition to Myers monograph the scholarship produced a flurry of papers with thought provoking ideas and subject matter that answered Jensen and Miller's call for multicultural works. Several anthologies made their way to the forefront in the 1980s. Joan Jensen's *With These Hand, Women Working on the Land* (1981) showcased that women of all cultures were active participants in every stage and every period of agricultural production. Melvena Thurman's edited work on *Women in Oklahoma* (1982), followed with projects that introduced the diverse culture of Oklahoma. It included such articles as "Cherokee Women" by Virginia

[22]Joan M. Jensen, and Darlis A. Miller. "The Gentle Tamers Revisited: New Approaches to the History of Women in the American West." *Pacific Historical Review* 49 (May 1980), 212-13; Jack Eblen, "An Analysis of Nineteenth Century Frontier Populations," *Demography* 2 (1965), 405-8.

[23] Sandra L. Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience* 1800-1915 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 35-6, 269-70.

Milam and "The Gender Liberation, Black Women as Elected Officials in Oklahoma" by Nudie Williams. Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson edited and divided *The Women's West* (1987) into five parts focusing on myths; meetings; emotional continuities; coming to terms with the West; and expansion of focus. Through their selections, the editors challenged previous stereotypes, and argued that generalizations were impossible without understanding the differences first, which required looking at all races, their cultures, and their understanding of their environment. Armitage pointed out that western women were not heroes, nor did they see themselves as such. They were ordinary people who failed to fit into the stereotypical roles previously developed for them as ladies, helpmates, or bad. Even men failed to fit into their pre-defined roles as adventurers, individualists, and violent murderers, causing a completely new approach to history that removed the old distortions.[24]

One year later, editors Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk presented *Western Women, Their Land, Their Lives* (1988). The editors' unique approach offered commentaries written by the author's peers along with an editorial comment from one of them. They selected works that asked more questions than they answered, which encouraged continued revision on the history of the American West. Schlissel's "Family on the Western Frontier" came to the conclusion that the family structure created a paradox. More work needed to be done on the family structure and homesteading because the conflicts of American independence and the need to remain connected presented the possibility of interesting conclusions. A comparative study by Myres on the frontierswomen of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States drew

[24] Joan M. Jensen, *With These Hands, Women Working on the Land* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1981), xxiii; Melvena Thurman, ed., *Women in Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: The Oklahoma Historical Society, 1982), 4-5; Susan Armitage and Elizabeth Jameson, *The Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 1-8, 15-18.

her to the conclusion that women who became involved in the economics of the farm expressed a form of happiness and a peace of mind that others did not have. Richard Griswold's work on Anglo women found that domesticity maintained a powerful hold on those who settled in the West and even if they might have opposed it they were so indoctrinated by schoolbooks, magazines, and newspapers that they most likely lacked the language to express their feelings. In fact, given the masculine domination of the era, he thought it appealed to Anglo women as a "powerful counterpoint" to male assumptions about family and community life.[25]

Despite the opportunities to renegotiate defined gender roles, women continued to cling to what they knew and understood about their place in society. Even the freedom of movement given to women with the mass production of the automobile failed to change the basic gender patterns according to Virginia Scharff in *Taking the Wheel* (1991*)*. The New Woman emerged with the wind in her hair, and a lower birth rate, but she still wanted to be a wife and a mother who maintained a hold on her position within the home. The new technology forced Americans to reinvent assumptions about themselves but gender changes were not involved. Even when women became involved politically as they did in Glen Jeansonne's *Women of the Far Right* (1996), they failed to evolve. His isolationist groups of women who led the Mothers' Movement accepted the gender separation and had no problem with men at the helm. They merely disagreed with who ran the show. Since men had placed them in charge of raising sons for the future, they took on the duty of changing the leadership to meet with their approval. They continued to maintain remnants of ideologies that women had supposedly freed themselves from over 100 years previously. Jeansonne drew the conclusion that beliefs of individuals were too complex

[25] Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, *Western Women Their Land, Their Lives* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 1-4, 14-15, 28-9, 88-9, 272-3.

and that attitudes of tolerance and change take lifetimes to change. He theorized that education only strengthens bigotry because it drives people closer to their hatred, which supports the argument that the more society tries to drive women away from domesticity, the closer they will hold on to it as a badge of honor.[26]

Mary Neth confirmed this tight hold on gender identity as did several other historians through the 1990s. She contended that most women accepted masculine duties on the farm without resentment, and that they simply adapted their responsibilities to include the additional work. Couples never made any efforts to renegotiate any predefined gender obligations. Leslie Hewes's Oklahoma Territory pioneer women who were poor and unskilled, also had the opportunity to redefine their identity through their work on the farm but instead stayed within their domestic roles through adaptation. In *Pioneer Women* (1998), Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith agreed with Myers earlier assessment that women had a capacity for survival as a result of their adaptability and that they too stayed voluntarily within their domestic sphere. They just modified their activities of cooking and cleaning by learning how to dust in a dugout and cook over an open fire pit, and clung to their eastern heritage by duplicating their old communities using whatever remnants they could salvage.[27]

As historians expanded their research into the twentieth century, a new opinion emerged that found women changing their social restrictions. Katherine Harris's *Long Vistas* (1993)

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[26] Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel, Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991), 5, 173, 175; Glen Jeansonne, *Women of the Far Right, The Mothers' Movement and World War II* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 185-88.

[27] Mary Neth, "Gender and the Family Labor System: Defining Work in the Rural Midwest," *Journal of Social History* 27 (Spring 1994), 565, 569; Leslie Hewes, "Making a Pioneer Landscape in Oklahoma Territory," *Geographical Review* 86 (October 1996), 591; Linda Peavy and Ursula Smith, *Pioneer Women: The Lives of Women on the Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 96.

argued that women's abilities to adapt to farm work had created an evolution at the end of the nineteenth century. Pioneer women had developed an elevated status within the domestic sphere and had redefined domesticity, which transcended the home experience. This flexibility not only showed men and women as partners in their endeavors but also revealed that they could become acquainted with each other outside their designated gender stereotypes. Nancy Hewitt detected the complete destruction of the cult of "True Womanhood" resulting in liberation without confusion or guilt, and Joan Smith agreed with her that western women completely redefined their roles through modification and opportunity.[28]

Smith argued against Riley's thesis of support through domesticity suggesting her focus too narrow and that Plains women were different. Weather conditions were harsh, the people were poor, and husband's pursued extra income away from the home leaving women in charge of the homestead. She found through her review of WPA interviews that the masculine skills, duties, and responsibilities of women on the homestead went far beyond gender expectations, which equaled and often exceeded their husband's abilities. From scaring off the coyotes that stole their hens, to knitting while herding the cattle, a blending of roles took place that erased the old definitions of a woman's duties. Even though Smith viewed Riley's work as groundbreaking, she said it failed to take into account the extreme poverty and conditions experienced by Oklahomans, which forced the blurring of gender roles. The added roles given to these women provided them with an informal education that made them independent survivors. Mary Katherine Fogle also considered the isolated nature of western life and drew a similar

[28] Katherine Harris, L*ong Vistas, Women and Families on Colorado* Homesteads (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1993), x, 156, 174-5; Nancy A. Hewitt, "Taking the True Woman Hostage," *Journal of Women's History* 14 (Spring 2002), 158; Joan Smith, "Learning to be Homesteaders, Frontier Women in Oklahoma," *American Educational History Journal* 37 (Spring 2010), 174-8, 184-5.

conclusion. Those women who made the decision to leave their eastern homes and forge a new life in uncharted territory had already made the first step toward viewing themselves as free and autonomous. Social economic constraints forced men to leave the farm to conduct business away from home, which furthered their wives' ability to face danger and make independent decisions. The self-confidence gained from the experiences of isolation on the frontier led women to freedom from the restrictions that accompanied patriarchal domination.[29]

Whether adaptability resulted in elevated status within domesticity or completely separated women from the sphere, the evidence clearly showed that women worked extremely hard on the frontier and felt self-satisfaction, pride, and joy from the results. Patterson-Black discovered in her review of WPA interviews that multiple women not only derived self-satisfaction through the extra work and the hard times but it also brought them happiness. Even though some viewed the taming of the wilderness as harsh and oppressive, others found it freed them from the strict, urban social constraints of domesticity. Jean Luckowski's Oklahomans had maintained a loyal and cheerful devotion to their families with an optimism focused on the future, and their strong Christian faith acted as the catalyst that provided hope rather than despair in the worst of times. Despite Jeffrey's sincere disappointment in the voluntary maintenance of domesticity, she discovered proud women who valued the fruits of their labors and successes, resulting from their perseverance and hard work. She agreed with Robert Griswold that female pioneers found immense joy and felt sincere accomplishment in their work, but continued to wonder why they clung to the familiarity of domestic ideology. She just did not understand how they extracted deep satisfaction and spiritual and physical nourishment out of the oppressiveness

[29] Smith, "Learning to be Homesteaders," 174-8, 184-5; Mary Kathryn Fogle, "Through a Paper Looking Glass: Reality and Mythology in the Personal Identities of Pioneer Women, 1860-1930," M.A. thesis, Texas Woman's University, 2012, 27, 31, 33, 39.

of domesticity. Griswold pointed out that domesticity equaled moral guardianship and that the ideology had become fluid and adaptable offering scholars a reminder that projecting a modern belief system onto women of the past produced a flawed result. Domesticity combined with farming created an opportunity for homesteading women to prove their worth and establish their necessity in a world of limited economic opportunities.[30]

Scholars of the last two decades have argued about the sphere of domesticity and whether or not it provided a place of disillusionment or discontentment for rural wives and their daughters. The homestead produced happy and content mothers according to Sarah Webb, and many of Neth's farmwomen described toil as a positive virtue and admitted that they enjoyed their work in the field. Women put their hearts into their work, which enriched and fulfilled their lives in Linda Reese's *Women of Oklahoma* (1997). Her pioneer wives stepped out of the sphere and demanded respect and consideration from their husbands. They understood the value of their lives and the contributions they made to the economic and social success of the entire family. Small achievements turned into large victories and financial success helped rural farmwomen overcome the urbanite's stereotype of them as poor, overworked, and uneducated. The dugout grew into a frame house, a stove replaced the open fire pit, some women emerged as schoolteachers, and their children graduated from high school. Janet Casey's twentieth century

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[30] Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders", 73-74; Jean Luckowski, "Pioneer Women in Oklahoma," M.A. thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1979, 10, 118; Jeffrey, *Frontier Women: The Trans Mississippi West*, 203-04; Julie Roy Jeffrey, a Commentary on "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," in *Western Women Their Land, Their Lives*," Lillian Schlissel etal., 39, 41; Robert Griswold, "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in *Western Women Their Land, Their Lives*, Schlissel etal., 20, 24.

farm wives not only ignored the "drudge label" but also considered themselves superior to the city dweller in work ethics and morality.[31]

In the earliest works on western women, historians found that that the duty lines between husbands and wives had blurred and intertwined on the frontier. Women not only developed self-satisfaction from the new independence they found on the frontier, but they also grew into marital partnerships where responsibilities overlapped and merged. The unity of the spousal relationship had more value than separate spheres and the ideology within the cult of "True Womanhood" began to evolve. The farm required the contribution of every family member and husbands and wives worked together to forge success at home and within the community, according to Patterson-Black. Many wives gained egalitarian status within marital relationships because their talents complemented those of their husbands. Home and social success depended on the skills of the couple. Sandra Myers and Kathleen Harris both commented on the increased opportunities for women through overlap of home and farm duties, which enhanced status within the relationship and created a sense of autonomy within the team. Couples shared physical duties and determination of resource allocation, discussing needs and wants as they related to the entire family. No longer viewed as distinct individual units, Armitage and Jameson warned against any continued separation of the spheres, declaring the frontier family existed as an interdependent

[31] Neth, "Gender and the Family Labor System," 569; S. A. Webb, "Growing Up Pioneer: Nannie Jeannette Williams, A Second Generation Pioneer Woman, Oklahoma Territory, 1895-1907." M. A. thesis, University of Central Oklahoma; Linda Williams Reese, *Women of Oklahoma: 1890-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 46-7; Janet Galligani Casey, "This is Your Magazine: Domesticity, Agrarianism, and the Farmers Wife," *American Periodicals: A Journal of History*, *Criticism and Bibliography* 14 (September 2004): 182, 187.

unit. Men and women shared beliefs and values and made the decision to move west based on a mutual decision of shared economic concerns.[32]

Margaret Walsh agreed with the pair and suggested that gender inclusion resulted in a new and improved pioneer woman and put an end to the cultural bias of historians who had insisted on a binary West. She argued that the frontier and its patterns were irrelevant without partner inclusion and that the self-sufficiency of the homestead depended on the ability of couples to work in tandem. Neth agreed and took it one step further stating that the quality of the relationship was more important than equality in general. The couples with the best relationships always negotiated their work into satisfying outcomes. She outlined the example of a young woman whose first husband shared all farm and domestic duties with her, coordinating and overlapping everything they did until he died in 1917. In contrast, her second husband did not help with what he classified as "domestic duties" and had plenty of free time to run around town, visiting and helping his fellow farmers and hanging out with friends. The separation of spheres left her angry and feeling alone. Instead of spousal support, she had to employ her children to assist her with the never-ending work role assigned to her. The marriage ended in divorce in 1926, and she took back her first husband's name.[33]

Linda Reese found something a little different in Oklahoma. Her women centered less on their understanding of themselves as separate sexual beings and more on their participation

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[32] Patterson-Black, "Women Homesteaders on the Great Plains Frontier," 68, 72; Myers, *Westering Women*, 165-66; Kathleen Harris, "Sex Roles and Work Patterns among Homesteading Families in Northeastern Colorado, 1873-1920," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 7, no. 3 (1984): 165, 167; Harris, "Sex Roles," 173; Armitage and Jameson, *The Women's West*, 8.

[33] Neth, "Gender and the Family Labor System," 564, 570; Neth, *Preserving the Family Farm*, 34; Margaret Walsh, "Women's Place on the American Frontier," *Journal of American Studies* 29(August 1995): 241, 247, 249-50.

within the family unit. She agreed with Jeffrey that they clung to separate spheres even though they abandoned a few old restrictions and Peavy and Smith's *Pioneer Women* (1998) concurred. They also viewed frontier women as contributors to the family unit rather than in a spousal partnership. Women merely copied and adapted their eastern lives and fostered unity in their marital relationships through their early experiences of home building. Despite the fact that men acknowledged the importance of women's work in the early homestead years, they still maintained separate work distinctions rather than establishing an overlapping partnership.[34]

The dates of homesteading and the sequence of generations have much to do with how women viewed their positions within their relationships. For most who moved from their eastern homes in the nineteenth century, "True Womanhood" had a strong hold on their belief system. Cynthia Culver Prescott's *Gender and Generation of the Far Western Frontier* (2007) supported this notion with her work on settlers who moved into Oregon's Willamette Valley in the latter half of the nineteenth century. She observed a complete separation of spheres for men and women in farm and domestic duties. In the early days, overlap occurred but once things settled into a rhythm, women accepted the endless domestic duties with pride and considered farm work beneath them. Prescott argued that couples married for convenience and abstract notions of love and equality did not enter marital relationships until the turn of the century, but that is highly debatable with less affluent individuals. Rebecca Sharpless and Melissa Walker pointed out in *Work, Family and Faith* (2006) that a women's skill on the farm not only contributed to, but also elevated the well-being of a family. Their ability to grow and preserve food not only provided healthier eating choices for the family, but it also helped them earn extra income, which widened everyone's choices. The family and its economy depended on the mother who received an

[34] Reese, *Women of Oklahoma*, 283; Peavy, *Pioneer Women,* 91.

elevated position within the family. Prescott, like Schlissel, and Webb found that first generation pioneer women had passed something on to their daughters that made them seek more equality and recognition in their spousal relationships.[35]

Oklahoma Territory's first generation pioneer women looked more like second and third generation homesteaders. Most did not begin arriving in the territory until the first land run of 1889 and more than half were children of homesteaders from surrounding states. The Morrow's parents and grandparents (who followed them north within a few years) had always been farmers and each had moved once before as they searched for self-sufficiency. Lula's parents and grandparents originated in Kentucky and Alabama and James's came from Alabama, each relocating to Texas around the 1880s. The evolution of women and their place in society had begun to change toward the end of the nineteenth century. Ideas of equality and suffrage permeated society through periodicals and newspapers and Lula's generation accepted education as the key to opportunity and change for their children.[36]

An evolution unfolded within the historiography that also emerges in the following pages. I wanted to find a way to destroy the label of domesticity that we place on women because it seems like such a dirty word in the face of feminism. Today it implies inequality, that women are incapable of contributing to the economic or political success, but in reality it fits both men and women on the homestead. Merriam-Webster defines it as: "life inside the home or the activities of a family or the people who share a home." The farm is not just a business, but a

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[35] Cynthia Culver Prescott, *Gender and Generation on the Far Western Frontier* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 10-13, 29-30; Melissa Walker and Rebecca Sharpless, *Work, Family, and Faith, Rural Southern Women in the Twentieth Century* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 10-11.

[36] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1; "B Caffee Family Tree," Ancestry.com, http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/42540013/family (accessed November 11, 2015).

way of life for families. Western Oklahoma's rural homesteading women continued to cling to certain aspects of domesticity through 1920, but not because they were weak or afraid. They hung on because it gave them power and allowed them to gain independence and self-confidence while quietly influencing the social, economic, and political future of Oklahoma. Many of these late pioneers were devoted Christians whose moral beliefs centered on their religious faith and even for those without a religious faith, they accepted and relished in the pride of raising children and making the farm a success within the partnership of their marriage. The Morrow's Church of Christ background accepted the social norms of domesticity for women, encouraging submissiveness for wives within the church and promoting equal love and respect between spouses outside the congregation. With few economic opportunities outside the farm, women found a leading role within their home life, which also helped them develop leadership skills.

Domesticity on a homestead gave women control over their own lives and that of their children. They developed leadership skills as they circumnavigated the education process for their children and became involved in helping them improve their lives. On the farm, their overlapping farm duties and control over their children helped them foster a partnership with husbands who needed their economic contributions and wanted to become involved in the lives of their family members. Some women loved the home life, while for others it may not have been their first choice in social role selection. For a western Oklahoma Anglo farm wife in 1900, domesticity meant something much different than it did to a woman living in a city and it changed again two decades later as automation eased some of the hard labor involved in farming. Living under a patriarchal society in 1900, many women had little choice between work outside the home or domesticity, but most could choose to marry a farmer or not. Urban women had developed an ill informed negative attitude about farm women as poor and ignorant but in reality

they had more choices than their urban sisters and could contribute to the farm in numerous ways. Armed with primary educations, many farm women insisted on something even better for their children and encouraged their government to provide it. Lula Morrow's story will help unfurl the social, political, economic, and personal connections that Oklahoma's western Oklahoma married homesteading women brought to the far remote reaches of the Territy/state in the first two decades of the century.

Chapter 2

A Honey Pond and a Fritter Tree: Homesteading in Western Oklahoma, 1900-1910

"We were young and full of hope determined
to make our move a success."
Lula Morrow

In the first year of the twentieth century, free plots of land in the far western reaches of Oklahoma Territory, enticed James and Lula Morrow into leaving Texas. Mortgage free property offered the hope of self-sufficiency and economic success, prompting the family of two adults and four children to pack everything they owned in a covered wagon and a buggy, say goodbye to friends and family in early September and set out for a new home. The hot late summer sun blazed across their trail during the day and the warm evenings allowed them to camp out under the twinkling stars. They arrived at their destination September 26, 1900 and scanned the landscape near the Red Moon Agency and Old Hammon. Tall swirls of smoke rose from little red mounds scattered across the prairie and the family soon learned that the little knolls represented the homes of their neighbors and were replicas of what their future residence would look like for the next three years.[37]

Prior to the Morrow's arrival, Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians had occupied the land. The tribes had migrated from Minnesota, after initial contact with Europeans, to the Dakotas and Montana in the early eighteenth century. Pushed further west by the Lakota they roamed the Great Plains from South Dakota to Kansas, hunting buffalo, warring, and trading with other Indians and the white man. The enactment of the Homestead Act had prompted the westward migration of thousands of Anglo families, hoping for a piece of the American dream and settling

[37] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1.

on land previously owned communally by the various Native American tribes. Desperate to maintain their way of life, the Indians fought against encroachment and reservation life, which resulted in loss of life on both sides. In an effort to end the fighting, the federal government negotiated the Medicine Lodge Treaties in 1867 with the Plains tribes, forcing the Arapaho and Southern Cheyenne to relocate to the designated reservation in western Indian Territory.[38]

The Homestead law of 1862 did not include the territory set aside by the legislature under the1830 Indian Removal Act for the settlement for the Five Tribes. The federal government completed relocation of the Five Tribes by 1842 and promised Indian Territory was the last stop but after the Civil War ended in 1865, the U.S. government resolved to move more Indians to the territory to end the fighting and allow a more peaceful settlement of westward migration. Officials had dispatched the military and negotiators across the country to relocate the last remnants of Native Americans either by force or voluntary agreement. The Medicine Lodge Treaty of 1867 attempted the settlement of the Central Plains Indians and the conference brought seven thousand Creeks, Comanche, Plains Apaches, Cheyenne and Arapaho to Kansas, where chiefs eventually relented to reduced and relocated territories.[39]

Initially, the Cheyenne and Arapaho people moved to a reservation in the Cherokee Outlet but in 1869 an executive order moved them further south. Over three thousand Cheyenne and Arapaho Natives received five million acres between the 98th and 100th meridians, bordering the Kiowa-Comanche line on the Washita River. American commissioners had warned the tribes during the Medicine Lodge negotiations that the buffalo would soon be gone and that they

[38] Donald J. Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 11.

[39] Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Oklahoma, A History of Five Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 144.

needed to live in peace, end their wandering ways, and take up the white way of farming, but leaders had difficulty accepting the white man's way and convincing the younger generation of the need to cooperate. By 1872, the government further reduced their reservation from five million to 600,000 acres, making room for the Wichita, Caddoe, Delaware, and the Texas tribes. When Elias C. Boudinot, a Cherokee lawyer, suggested in 1879 that 14 million acres of public domain property existed in Indian Territory for settlement, it seemed inevitable that the government intended further reduction. In addition, the Boomer movement followers led by David L. Payne applied considerable pressure to Congress to open the land for white settlement, resulting in a solution presented by Senator Henry L. Dawes. He presented the Dawes Act, passed by Congress in 1887, which gave the president the power to make reservation Indians landholders and citizens, formally ending their cultural practice of communal ownership. In addition to forcing Native communities to adopt farming practices, the legislature made way for white settlement by appropriating millions of remaining acreage after they made the allotments. Individual Indians received plots of land, which varied from 160 acres for the head of a household down to 40 acres for infants, and Cheyenne Indian agents tried to prepare the Native Americans for a future in land ownership and farming.[40]

Congress passed an official amendment to the Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 on March 2, 1889, which split Indian Territory in half effectively making room for new homesteads in the west and appointing a governor over the new "Oklahoma Territory." On April 19, 1892, approximately 25,000-30,000 whites entered the vacated Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation and within hours the tribes became a minority, consisting of barely 10 percent of the population.

[40] Gibson, *Oklahoma,*144-6, 174-5; Donald Berthrong, *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal, Reservation and Agency Life in the Indian Territory, 1875-1907* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 119, 145-6.

Tensions mounted between the two groups during the last part of the nineteenth century, but by the time the Morrow family arrived in 1900, conflicts had reduced to a minimum with a more resigned Native American attitude.[41]

Lula wrote in her memoir that they moved to Oklahoma Territory in response to newspaper advertisements in which Uncle Sam promised something special on the land still available. A "honey pond and a fritter tree" awaited the multitudes if they would come and live on the land in Western Oklahoma. Most arrived sight unseen even though a few husbands left their families behind and searched for a plot of land prior to the move. The Morrows had faith and packed up their children and their belongings, hoping for the best, sight unseen. They selected a 160-acre plot near the town of Old Hammon, close to the border of Roger Mills and Custer Counties in western Oklahoma.[42]

In the first ten years, Lula concentrated her attention on her family and the success of the farm, hoping to raise her children as useful and successful members of society. The aspiration of creating a "better life" appeared as a common thread among most pioneers and the mortgage free land of Oklahoma Territory provided families that hope. Lula joined her husband in a voluntary, negotiated partnership and the entire family contributed toward success of the farm. Despite the opportunity to demand equality and independence outside of the patriarchal structure, she happily retained her power over the domestic sphere. She concentrated on helping friends and family in the creation of a society of Christian family values by instilling the ethic and benefits

[41] Berthrong, *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal*, 183; Several WPA interviews indicate that occasional Indian violence accompanied movement in Indian and Oklahoma Territory until the turn of the twentieth century – see Mrs. Bettie Monahan, interviewed by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 64, September 17, 1937, 31-2 or Lydia Morgan, interviewed by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 64, September 29, 1938, 493.

[42] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1.

of hard work in her children, teaching them neighborly love, and ensuring they each had a good education. Homesteading victories required hard work, patience, endless energy, and a fair portion of luck and Lula and James believed in their future and that of their children, resolving together to make the best of their home as first generation Oklahoma pioneers.[43]

The Morrows were a young, growing family when they moved to the territory from Texas in 1900. Lula and James had both moved with their parents to Texas in the latter part of the nineteenth century among the thousands of hopeful homesteaders moving west after the passing of the Homestead Act. Texas had never been included in the Homestead Act because the federal government had never owned the land. To entice residents south, the Texas government offered state owned land free from creditors under its Constitution of 1876, which probably drew James parents, John and Mary Morrow from Alabama between 1880 and 1890, and Lula's parents, John and Cora Hall from Kentucky just before 1880. Prior to the marriage of the John and Lula in 1894, the census records listed James as a farm laborer and Lula as a teacher. She quit her teaching job after marriage, and the couple settled near their families in Bono, Texas, a small rural town that contained no more than eighty residents at its peak. On September 13, 1900, the young couple left Bono for Oklahoma Territory as part of the last wave of farming hopefuls taking advantage of the free property still available in the former Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation. In fact, most of the new western Oklahoma Territory arrivals came primarily from Texas followed mostly by residents of Kansas, Indian Territory, Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, and Tennessee.[44]

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[43] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1-3.

[44] Joseph W. McKnight, "Homestead Law," Texas State Historical Association, https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mlh02 (accessed February 9, 2016); B Caffee Family Tree, "James Morrow," 1870 and 1880 census, Ancestry.com, http://person.ancestry.com/tree/42540013/person/19808040723/facts (accessed June 1, 2015); B Caffee Family Tree,

Most Oklahoma Territory homesteaders arrived with little cash and were one or two failed crops away from failure. Many families relocated to town to find steady work, abandoning their farms and by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the desertion rate was 75 percent of the original claims before title cleared. Those that did survive, like the Morrows, usually came from farming backgrounds. In WPA interviews, homesteaders talked about the harsh conditions, unpredictable weather, and primitive living, but mostly they spoke with pride about the hard work, their sacrifices, and eventual success. Lula and James probably survived as well as they did because they both had the benefit of growing up in farm families, which prepared them to face whatever challenges awaited them. Lula never complained about the move to Oklahoma Territory and used the term "we" quite often, referring to either she and James or the entire family as a singular unit. She remembered fondly that she and James "were full of hope, determined to make our move a success," which indicates a willing decision on her part to leave her extended family behind and face the challenges of an uncertain future.[45]

The Morrow matriarch said very little about the thirteen-day trip from Texas to Roger Mills County. The family probably followed the Great Western Trail formerly used by cattle ranchers, and crossed the Red River, the North Fork of the Red River, and the Washita River before arriving at their destination near Old Hammon. The fear of Indian attack that existed

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"Lula Doss Hall," 1870 and 1880 census, Ancestry.com, http://person.ancestry.com/tree/42540013/ person/19808040723/facts (accessed June 1, 2015); David Minor, "Bono, TX," Handbook of Texas Online, http://www.tshaonline.orghandbook/ online/articles/hrb45 (accessed January 26, 2014); Indian-Pioneer Papers, Vols. 1-116, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; Allene Bottom, ed. "Pioneer Days, Hammon History, from Hammon and the Surrounding Areas." Hammon High School, Hammon, Oklahoma, 2000. Thirty-seven percent of the stories sampled in the Pioneer-Indian papers showed Texas origination, followed by Kansas and the respective states in order of listing. "Pioneer Days," made specific reference to Hammon founding members, of which 47 percent came from Texas.

[45] Hodge, "Pioneer Days," 6; Morrow, Grandma's Diary, 1-3.

during the last half of the nineteenth century had greatly reduced by the time the Morrows arrived in the territory. The U.S. army had defeated most resistance groups nationally and sequestered the remaining Native Americans to reservations by 1890. In western Oklahoma, E. Woodson, the Indian agent appointed to the Cheyenne-Arapaho people living near the eventual Morrow settlement, subdued the tribes by breaking the power of the old chief's and withholding rations when they failed to cooperate in the late 1890s. According to multiple WPA accounts, most Indians in western Oklahoma kept to themselves after the turn of the century, and whites rarely interacted with them. Occasionally a few demanding wanderers helped themselves to livestock and other food sources, or negotiated for food, but they generally kept to themselves and were not considered a threat to the Anglo populations.[46]

As a result of the decreased danger, most families did not have to travel in groups but could travel alone without much fear of attack. Many still journeyed in covered wagons, but it had also become popular to take the train as far as the track took them. Often aided by relatives that met them at the train station, families covered the remaining distances in a carriage or covered wagon. The Morrow family made their move alone and traveled about 310 miles, which took them about three weeks. September is generally a good month in Oklahoma, with hot days and warm evenings, and several women who had moved to the state as children recalled their trips with fondness. Rannie Eggers family trip took twenty-one days and included six covered

[46] The Price of Freedom: Americans at War, Western Indian Wars, "The Reservation," The Smithsonian National Museum of American History, http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/printable/section.asp?id=6 (accessed February 11, 2016); Berthrong, *The Cheyenne Arapaho Ordeal*, 212-4; Mrs. L. L. Males, "Cheyenne, Arapaho Indians Appear Strange, Young Girls Reveal Life During Early Days, *Elk City Daily News*, September 1, 1968, 1; Indian Pioneer Papers Collection, University of Oklahoma Western History Collections.

wagons. She and her siblings saw the trip as a grand adventure of camping with nightly cookouts. [47]

For other families, the trips were not much fun. Some relayed stories of traveling in horrible weather conditions, while others experienced fear when strangers approached their camps. Rebecka Edwards did not leave her home in Texas without considerable persuasion from her husband. She had heard tales of a murderous Indian chief in Oklahoma Territory, which frightened her before she left for Oklahoma. Her husband tried to alleviate some of her concerns by building a house on the claim before bringing his family of eight to the western territory, but it did not make the move any easier for her. She lost sleep three of the eight nights fearing strangers wanted their possessions. One evening her husband left her alone with the children for a few hours when a Native American man rode into camp. The Indian started to make demands of her when her thirteen-year old son picked up his shotgun and aimed into the tree directly above the Native man's head. He left their camp, but she could not sleep, afraid he would return. Another night, she said a Mexican wandered into the camp and demanded she make him dinner and prepare a pallet for him. She and her husband stayed awake keeping a watch on their belongings and when he demanded breakfast in the morning they told him to be on his way. On another evening the family heard rustlers just outside their camp, which forced the couple to stay awake again, guarding the camp. Edwards described the trip as a strain that was almost too much to bear and she was grateful and relieved when they arrived at their new home in January 1899. It took her several years to find comfort in her new home.[48]

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[47] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary,"1; Rannie Eggers, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 27, January 19, 1938, 240.

[48] Mrs. Rebecka J. Edwards, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 27, October 15, 1937, 252-4.

Every homesteading family faced some type of risk on the journey but traveling with little knowledge about crossing rivers and moving without additional adults in the party, often left homesteaders vulnerable. Lucy Hutton and her husband left their Kansas home with a five-year old boy and an eleven-month old. She and her husband each drove a wagon and they put the five-year old in charge of watching the baby. When they reached the Canadian River, Lucy said the white blowing sand almost brought their traveling to a stop and when they reached quicksand, she thought were going to lose their belongings because her husband had no idea hos to cross the river quicksand. She had grown up near sandy streams and her parents had taught her how to navigate the dangerous bottoms prompting her to take the lead away from her husband and got the family across safely. After the family reached Weatherford, Mr. Hutton became so ill he could not sit up and drive his team of horses. Lucy put the little boy in charge of his father's wagon and drove the other with the baby on her lap, a distance of twenty-three miles, to her brother's home in Cordell. Previous homesteading and farming experience not only provided many women with the skills necessary to survive but they also gained the respect of their husbands. The strength and resilience of these female homesteaders gave them an unqualified pride that they spoke of often with their WPA interviewers.[49]

After filing on their claims, most homesteaders built their shelter. They set up tents and wagons for temporary sleeping arrangements and then started the task of building a more permanent structure. In western Oklahoma, the majority built underground homes called dugouts, which consisted of large earth holes with sod reinforced sides, and a makeshift roof of cottonwood logs covered with more sod. Families generally resided in these structures for the

[49] Lucy Hutton, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 46, September 22, 1937, 223.

first few years and despite living underground, homesteaders rarely complained about them in interviews. The Morrow matriarch explained that there were few complaints about the living situation because everyone lived in the same type of residence and wore the same type of clothing, which reduced potential envy. Women wore white bonnets for nice wear and men wore overalls seven days a week. Lula said it was not unusual to see a preacher in his weekday work clothes on Sunday morning. She and her neighbors accepted the simplicity of their living situation; they all looked the same and enjoyed it, which made life less stressful.[50]

Homesteaders built their dugout with a minimal expenditure of cash and a few tools. Most dwellings averaged 14'x16', were dug four to eight feet deep, and had walls reinforced with wood or sod bricks. They cover roofs with planks, logs, and sod but if one had a little money for improvements, they covered it with purchased shingles. Generally consisting of one room, a fireplace stood at one end and a door at the other. If slightly above ground, they might add manufactured windows purchased in town or openings would be covered with blankets and quilts until the owner could raise the cash to pay for the upgrade. The dwellings were warm in the winter and cool in the hot prairie summers and most dissatisfaction came from the havoc caused by rain and unwanted squatters like rattlesnakes and rats, not from residing in a red dirt hole in the ground. One woman told her WPA interviewer that every time it rained they had to put buckets, pans, and tubs on the beds to keep them dry. Rats chewed through the wall of one residence causing water to fill the floor as high as six inches during a rainstorm. Those who built back into the hills had better luck with the rain unless it came pouring down the hill and also caused a wall to cave in. Women initially less than thrilled about living underground, treasured the more permanent shelter after residing outside or in a tent for a month. The fact that women

[50] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1.

accepted living in a hole in the ground displays their fortitude and resiliency. Homesteading women accepted their lives with a determined matter of fact attitude and they made the best of their daily existence finding happiness and joy throughout their lives.[51]

For some of the families, the dugout not only housed kin but occasionally provided shelter for strangers and friends. One doctor recalled building a 15'x 25' earth home to treat patients and never refused shelter to a stranger. During one cold spell he and his wife kept twenty-five people in the warmth of their residence, providing food and refuge for everyone who came by. A family of five, living in a 12'x14' space often opened their home to the various travelers who stopped by, and once during a gospel meeting a woman housed and fed several families even though she barely had enough food for herself. The Washita River frequently flooded and one family that lived near the flood zone allowed people to stay with them until the waterway was safe enough to cross. Homesteaders commonly shared their homes with strangers, offering food and shelter when they barely had enough for themselves. They did not seem to mind making room for one more if the situation required it creating a community of kindness among the little red mounds in western Oklahoma.[52]

This open door community did not necessarily apply to the Native Americans that showed up unannounced at the new homesteads. Nancy Duckworth had developed a fear of the Indians and remembered that they often came to the door begging for food, claiming it was for a

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[51] Ethel Wilder Boucher and Clara Morgan Berry, "Cowboy Leaves Trail for Hammon Home," Pioneer Days, 73; Pearl Brannon, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 10, April 22, 1938, 343; Mrs. T. L. Johnson, interview by Ethel May Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 48, January 21, 1938, 409; Betty Hodges, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 43, November 19, 1937, 115.

[52] Dr. J. A. Jester, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 48, November 1, 1937, 122; Johnson, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 408; Anna L. Green, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 33, December 17, 1937, 20; Boucher, "Cowboy Leaves Trail," 73.

sick child or wife. Like Edwards, her anxiety stemmed from a story someone told her about an Indian who killed a young boy while he guarded his father's wagon. The parent found the child dead with a wagon tongue driven through him and the story stuck with her, whether true or not. Georgia Hancock and two of her sisters were left alone one day when an Indian by the name of Mad Wolf visited their home. Terrified by the stories they had heard about him, they locked the door and hid under their beds until he was gone. Mrs. L. E. Stephens recounted the times that Indians came to her door asking for something to eat and she said that occasionally she cooked for them and at other times pretended not to understand so they would leave. She and her husband leased land through a land agent, owned by an old Indian named Heap Crow, who would often come to their house uninvited for a cooked meal. At one point, the old man decided the couple ought to pay him directly for part of the profits of their wheat crop, in addition to the lease payment, but her husband refused his request. Their relationship with the Native man grew tense after he threatened to set their crop on fire, and even though he never followed through with his promise, they moved within a few years to a farm closer to Cheyenne.[53]

Those instances were rare and most homesteaders said they either had little to no contact with Native Americans after 1900 or developed respectful relationships. Delina Thompson traveled with her husband's freighting job and cooked for his fellow workers out of their tent with a cook stove. The couple often set their tents up outside of Weatherford on Saturdays, as did several Native American families. She counted as many as twenty tipis between her tent and town on any given weekend and said the Indian women liked to come to her tent to see her stove.

[53] Nancy Duckworth, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 26, April 18, 1983, 93; Mrs. L.E. Stephens, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 87, April 28, 1938, 215-16; Georgia Hancock, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 38, January 25, 1938, 125.

They would walk into the tent uninvited and exchange a few words and signs with each other. When they tired of the oddity, they left without a word to Thompson. Other Anglo women described the local Native women who came to town as shy with odd cultural habits. They usually pulled their blankets just below their eyes and kept silent. Mothers carried their babies on their backs, thinking nothing of nursing them in the open along the boardwalks in town.[54]

Despite the cultural and language differences, whites and Native Americans still managed to trade in the western rural areas. If they did not speak the same language, they pointed and used sign language to communicate. Most of the fruit sources in Oklahoma Territory existed along the creeks and rivers owned by the Cheyenne and Arapaho, which prompted the white residents to offer chickens and eggs in exchange for the plums and berries. Occasionally the Indians decided they needed to renegotiate terms and were not afraid to approach the white residents at their homes and demand or help themselves to more of whatever they found. After years of trading with a particular family, one Native American man decided the family had taken too much and required additional payment. He visited the wife after her husband left for work but could not make her understand what he wanted. He returned later in the day with two women, and another man who entered uninvited and threatened to take the plums she had just canned. Without much choice the frightened woman pointed toward her her chickens and her visitors left happy with five of her birds and none of her plums.[55]

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[54] Delina Thompson, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 90, September 20, 1937, 278-9; Mrs. L. L. Males, "Cheyenne, Arapaho Indians Appear Strange, Young Girls Reveal Life during Early Days, *Elk City Daily News*, September 1, 1968, 1; Mrs. L. L. Males, "Ewa Trawick Tells the Old Hammon Story," Pioneer Days, May 2, 1968, 62.

[55] Males, "Cheyenne, Arapaho Indians Appear Strange," 1; Rannie Eggers, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 27, January 19, 1938, 283; Mrs. H. A. Gale, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 33, December 17, 1937, 61; Mrs. Annie Tracey, interviewed by Velma Hance, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 92, July 19, 1937, 3; Males, "Cheyenne, Arapaho Indians Appear Strange," 1.

The few occasional problems with Native Americans in western Oklahoma Territory did not prevent the white settlers from staying and make the best of their situation. Women set out to make their temporary dugout homes something they were proud of. They developed clever ways to transform the residence into an inviting home with very little money. They added feminine touches by lining the walls with cheesecloth, laying plank floors, and putting homemade rugs on the ceiling. Some even plastered the inside walls and installed full windows. Nothing deterred female settlers from making homes out of holes in the ground, and improvising when necessary. Even Christmas found its way to the desolate countryside when a team of sisters cut down a hackberry tree, dug a hole in the floor of the dugout to prop it up, and covered it with strung popped corn. They had little money for presents but managed candy for the children and cigars for the men. One of the sisters described it as the best Christmas she had ever experienced despite the blisters she got from walking five miles to town to buy the gifts.[56]

Most homesteaders lived in their dugouts several years until they had saved enough extra money to build a frame house. James Morrow created a three-room home in 1903, and it must have seemed like a castle compared to the one room earth home because Lula had given birth to two more children for a total of six. Most women did not openly complain about their dugouts but certainly boasted about their new wood frame houses, as did Rannie Eggers who moved into a three-room frame house with a cellar and a cistern. Others described their improvements of glass windows, plank floors, shingled roofs, and gyp rock, whitewashed walls in detail. For those

[56] Johnson, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 408; Gale, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 64; Green, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 17.

with less money, doors, glass windows, and fancy floors came later prompting women to use the quilts, old wagon sheets, and homemade rugs that had sufficed in the dugout.[57]

Interior furnishings remained simple with few comforts. Couches and extra chairs simply did not exist in the early days because moving in covered wagons and buggies required smart packing and pioneers rarely had room for large pieces of furniture. Once they arrived at their destinations, they utilized the wood found around creeks and rivers to create beds, tables, and chairs. Men used their carpentry skills and the local cottonwood trees to make whatever they needed. One husband fashioned the family's beds on studs with poles set horizontally and topped with a straw mattress. He also found old wooden boxes for tables and chairs, and nailed another box he made to the wall for his wife's dishes. On a few occasions, the homemade furniture remained in the home for years. One woman said her husband refused to replace a few of their pieces until the 1920s.[58]

In addition to decorating their homes, food dominated the daily activities of the rural women and they quickly learned how to adapt their skills in primitive circumstances. The poorest families cooked in Dutch ovens over open fireplaces and those with a little extra money brought or ordered cook stoves that often doubled as the heating element within the home. The popular modified monkey stove doubled as a wood-burning heater with two burners on the top. Early fuel sources consisted of anything available on the prairie, from wood gathered at the creeks, to cow and buffalo chips. Men, women, and children shared the duties of gathering fuel and showed their resourcefulness in finding water, often long distances from their residences.

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[57] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 2-3; Eggers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 283; Georgia Emma Pinkerston, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 71, April 27, 1938, 455.

[58] Duckworth, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 97; Georgia Hancock, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 38, January 25, 1938, 122.

Neighbors shared their wells and both the women and the men traveled several miles daily and weekly to collect it. The responsibility generally fell to women whose husband's earned extra income away from the home and one woman sent her children up a steep hill daily to collect the water from a nearby spring. The most fortunate families homesteaded near creeks and rivers, but Native Americans occupied most of that land forcing them to find springs and dig wells. Within a few years, those hauling water usually developed the financial means to have a well dug close to the residence. Fannie Eisele's father put his entire family to work digging for water as soon as they arrived at their claim. He dug with a pick shovel while mother and children hauled the dirt from the hole in small pails.[59]

Along with shelter and water, food sources created a major concern. New settlers tried to live on the small stores of food they brought with them or hunted the wild game available until they developed an income. The very poor who arrived with nothing, ate anything they could hunt on the prairie and women learned to adapt their cooking skills. Skilled hunters and trappers kept the family fed with wild fare and wives learned to cook everything from jackrabbits and squirrels to wild geese. Milk was essential and the Morrow's, like many others, brought their cow with them when they moved to the territory. For those who had not previously farmed, they scrimped enough cash to buy a milk cow as soon as possible. Eventually, most women raised chickens, and sold eggs and butter in town, slowly increasing their stock despite the occasional Indian raid of their animals.[60]

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[59] Stephens, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 214; J. B. Odell, interview by Ruby Wolfenbarger, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 68, January 13, 1938, 48; Lillie M. Garrett, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Paper, vol. 33, November 10, 1937, 226; Fannie L. Eisele. "We Came to Live in Oklahoma Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 38 (Spring 1960), 60.

[60] Eisele, "We Came to Live," 96; Bertie Austin, interview by Aidee B. Bland, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 3, April 18, 1938, 24, 336; Eggers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 281-3.

Many women shared stories about the lack of food in the early years of homesteading but they also spoke with pride about their or their mother's creativity in the kitchen, which became the early key to survival. Women showed great skill and resourcefulness in the kitchen. If they lacked milk, they learned how to make sourdough bread without it and created recipes for water gravy. Eda Elsberry remembered her mother's sourdough biscuits and Dutch oven cooking with fondness, claiming the biscuits were the best she had ever tasted. Jason Little experienced little success in his homesteading adventures and credited his wife with their endurance. He said they would have starved if she had not picked up buffalo heads and boiled them for soup. Women also learned how to shoot and cooked prairie chickens and squirrels that wandered on to their homestead.[61]

In addition to creative cooking, the general responsibility for raising chickens, caring for the family animal stock, and gardening fell to the women. They made butter with the cream and raised chickens for the eggs. The majority of garden items that grew best in the western part of the territory were tomatoes, peas, beans, melons, sweet potatoes, and cabbage. Husbands generally took the extra milk, eggs, butter, and garden produce to town to provide additional income for the family and some families traded their extra items for dry goods brought by a traveling peddler. In addition, neighbors looked out for each other and shared with each other whenever possible. Ranchers living near Samuel McMilliam allowed him to use one of their dairy cows in exchange for raising a calf, and several other pioneers relayed stories about their neighbors providing them with their extra milk and butter until they could afford a cow of their own. Minimal fruit sources provided a form of entertainment for families who took weekend

[61] Eda Elsberry, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 28, April 15, 1938, 13; Jason Little, interview by Louis S. Barnes, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 54, March 1, 1938, 299.

camping trips to the free areas along the Washita River where they picked as many wild plums, grapes, and currants as they could bring home, canning what they could not eat.[62]

Although the primary responsibility of the farm lay with the male head of household, everyone in the family contributed to its success. Western Oklahomans planted corn, wheat, small amounts of cotton, and various types of feed. They often broke sod with a plow pulled by a team of horses or mules and planted by hand. They tilled fireguards first because the prairie fires destroyed everything in their path and before 1907, built fences around their property to protect their crops from the roaming cattle. Eda Elsberry's father, Isaac Newton Johnson, also known as "Herdlaw" Johnson, was an instrumental figure in the passage of a herd law in the territory, which protected crops from trampling cattle. He held a place of high esteem among his fellow farmers because he not only assisted many new settlers in finding available homesteads but he and his wife also fed and housed new arrivals, and helped them file their claims. Many settlers mentioned knowing and having received assistance from the Johnsons during their times of need and deeply appreciated their generosity with their time and food. Elsberry described her father as a jovial man and her mother as the constant worrier. They worked as a team to help their neighbors, new and old, in part as repayment because someone helped Johnson find a homestead when the family had first arrived from Texas. Johnson never met a stranger and his friends and acquaintances remembered him with fondness and respect.[63]

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[62] Rannie Eggers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 283; Mrs. Bettie Monahan, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 64, September 17, 1937, 32; Fannie Wafer, interview by Ruby Wolfenbarger, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 94, October 1, 1937, 87; Eda Elsberry, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 14; Samuel L. McMilliam, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 59, November 24, 1937, 231; Anna L. Green, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 36, March 14, 1938, 21-22.

[63] Elsberry, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 11-13.

Harsh and unpredictable weather conditions in western Oklahoma coupled with volatile markets made profit farming difficult enough for the western Oklahoma homesteader without the unmerciful charges of the distributor. To solve the problem, one community founded a farmer's union with each member pledging a certain number of acres in watermelons and peanuts. The organization shipped the products by train carloads to eastern markets, providing the families with some monetary success. Another farmer grew enough cabbage, corn, and tomatoes on his seven acres that people came from miles away to buy his produce, allowing him to sell directly without the intervention of a middleman.[64]

Those frugal farmers able to survive the bad seasons of hail, insects, and dry weather managed to make enough profit to hire laborers and relieve their wives from farm duties. In early 1900s, one hail storm destroyed acres of cotton and wheat. One woman remembered having to sell 150 of her hens to buy more seed, only to have the second crop destroyed by more hail. She worked hard raising stock in order to provide additional income and when her husband absolved her of farm duties, she considered the farm a success. They had started with nothing and worked hard as a team to plant and harvest various crops. Married at the age of eighteen with $6 to their names, they gave half to the preacher for his services and depended on faith for survival. They broke ground, sowed seed, weeded, and harvested with nothing more than the joint effort of their family for the first years. Their achievements were the result of a team effort and the wife remembered their hardships as a badge of honor but she also considered it a victory to be

[64] Bertie Austin, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 341; August Stanka, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 86, November 22, 1937, 439.

absolved of farm duties, preferring power over the domestic aspects of the homestead to manual crop labor.[65]

After homesteaders established their homes, they came together to establish schools for their children. Lula had been a teacher before she married James and made education a top priority for their offspring. Within the first couple of years, they helped the community pay for and build a schoolhouse closer to home. Residents named it Lone Elm and it remained open until 1923. Until the territory became a state, neighbors combined resources to purchase the materials for the schools and raised the building together. Other communities utilized abandoned dugouts or dug new ones until they had sufficient resources to build a wooden structure. The buildings ranged in size from one-room dugouts to multi-room boarding schools and books were scarce forcing teachers to use their own books for instruction.[66]

Forbidden from attending white schools, Cheyenne and Arapaho children had the limited benefit of the Red Moon Boarding School in Hammon after 1898, but resented the Anglo enforcement of assimilation and fought against sending their children to boarding school. In 1899, Indian agent A. E. Woodson threatened to cut off their annuity payments if they did not deliver their children to school, which increased the average attendance from less than fifteen to as many as fifty between 1900 and 1903. The students learned industrial and homemaking skills and teachers forbade them from speaking their native language. According to the school superintendent, the institution thrived under his leadership with a laundry; bake house; two

[65] Madge Mitchell, "City Pioneer Enjoys Entertaining Young People, Mrs. Ben Brooks Recalls Life in Elk City," *Elk City Daily News*, February 6, 1972.

[66] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 3; Allen, Indian-Pioneer Papers: Mitchell, "City Pioneer," *Elk City Daily News*, 1973; Bertha A. Hoard, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 43, January 24, 1938, 5-6; Z. M. Short, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers vol. 83, September 20, 1937, 50.

cisterns; windmill and pump; farmland and stock. Chief Whiteshield disagreed with the success of the school and complained to Woodson, which resulted in an investigation that eventually cleared the administrator.[67]

Before statehood, the remainder of the rural population raised their small schools as soon as extra money became available. Multiple families moved temporarily to town to provide additional educational opportunities for their children if the farm was too far away. Until statehood, most primary schools were only open for three months of the year in the rural areas and children walked as far as six miles, which occasionally proved to be a dangerous undertaking. The little education building for Betty Monahan's children closed because mountain lions threatened them and Lillie Garrett shot at a coyote that chased her children home one evening. In 1910, the Hall grandparents rented a house in Cheyenne to provide a residence for two Morrow and two Caffee children who wanted to attend a month long normal school. Lula and her twin sister Lizzie took their smallest children and made the thirty-mile journey by buggy to deliver food from the farm in order to cut down on expenses. Each person provided whatever they could to ensure the success of the children.[68]

Men and women taught school with educational experience from third grade to college. Fannie Eisele had a fifth grade education and not only taught her neighbor's children plus six others in 1906, she also had to rescue a couple of them on more than one occasion. Two of the children rode to school on a stubborn donkey that often stopped ½ mile from the school and refused to move any further. When they did not show up for school, she and the other children

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[67] Hodge, "History of Hammon," Pioneer Days, 16; Berthrong, *The Cheyenne and Arapaho Ordeal,* 230.

[68] Mrs. Betty Monahan, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 31; Lillie M. Garrett, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 226; Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 3.

rode out to rescue them, taking up precious time needed for reading, writing, and mathematics. Salaries ranged from $25.00 to $40.00 per month and the territorial government paid in warrants that teachers could not always cash. Alfred Dame had to farm for extra income and traded his warrants for goods at the grocery in town. After statehood in 1907, education slowly improved requiring extended periods of attendance, better buildings, and immediate pay for teachers.[69]

The school building also doubled as the church building in the first decade. The Morrow family called for a preacher almost as soon as they arrived in Roger Mills County. Within months of arrival, Lula and James wrote to brother Farris, a Church of Christ preacher from Johnson County, asking him to plant a church and preach for them in Oklahoma. Lula cared for the Farris family in her home until they completed a dugout and corral on their new claim. The Morrow family depended on religion as their moral compass and social sustenance. Lula recorded the baptismal dates of each of her children, stressing the importance she placed on the events. Most of the rural residents of the area looked forward to church as a weekly gathering of friends and family and a reaffirmation of their admirable, unwavering faith in God. [70]

Rebecka Edwards attended church every Sunday morning and in the evening the congregation held singing sessions. Eggers uncle preached to the Anglo families in the schoolhouse on Sunday morning and to the Cheyenne people in the afternoon. Despite the disinterest of the Indians, he stood in front of their tipis singing songs and preaching. Lacking funds to build buildings and hire preachers, some families hosted church in their homes until they saved enough money to raise a building. Other communities gathered on Sundays in a

[69] Eisele, "We Came," 61, 64; Mr. Alfred Dame, interviewed by Ethel E. Palmers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 23, June 18, 1937, 399.

[70] Morrow, Grandma's Diary," 1, 3.

church building, but only received formal sermons once a month, delivered by circuit preachers. One group received a lesson from a United Brethren pastor every two weeks and on the alternating weeks, a Baptist minister delivered lessons. In the summer, communities held singing meetings and revival meetings, drawing people from miles around, who camped out and treated the religious conference as a family vacation. Anna Green's district held a tent meeting and she housed and fed several strangers despite her lack of resources. Church activity provided a form of entertainment and created the centerpiece of the moral ideology of these rural pioneers.[71]

The distances between farms left many people lonely and aching for social activity. In addition to church and camping trips, communities found many other ways to gather. The Egger children looked forward to the arrival of the local peddler every two weeks and the city of Cheyenne held large picnics and barbecues that brought residents together. Pie suppers, literary society meetings, and dancing parties also provided significant entertainment and opportunities to gather. The Creason's friends created a tradition of arranging frequent gatherings where they gathered at each others homes and exchanged news and discussed community development. In separate interviews, both he and his wife expressed how much they looked forward to these get-togethers. Elsberry remembered talent contests incorporated into the literary society meetings and also spoke about watching the Cheyenne Sun Dance. White families curious about Native American culture also enjoyed watching pow-wows. Marjorye Heeney received a special invitation to celebrate Christmas with the Cheyenne people near Hammon. She described a native dance, held in the Indian community hall, followed by a speech from Chief Whiteshield,

[71] Rebecka Edwards, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 256; Rannie Eggers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 282; no last name provided for Uncle Dave; Anna Green, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 20; Mrs. H. A. Gale, interview by Ethel Mae Yates, Indian-Pioneer Papers, vol. 33, December 17, 1937, 66.

which ended with the passing of modest gifts. Despite Sweeney's unique invitation, most entertainment was not multicultural. The tribes allowed the Anglos to watch their dances and celebrations but not participate. White celebrations generally involved entire families who attended activities together as diversions from the difficult job of farming on isolated pieces of land and women, more than men, needed a break from their isolation because they remained more rooted to the home with fewer reasons to venture into town. Business dealings related to the farm, along with most economic opportunities were generally limited to the male gender.[72]

Many husbands sought financial opportunity outside of the farm to earn the extra money needed for survival especially in those first years. Most men talked about taking jobs freighting goods and/or people, which took them away from the residence for several days at a time. J. B. Odell hauled wood for fuel from Sayre to Texas and Delina Thompson's husband covered the thirty-mile territory from Cheyenne to Old Hammon transporting whatever needed delivery. Lillie Garrett's spouse found work as a stone and brick mason building homes in Elk City and left her alone to care for the farm with her Winchester to keep her company. Leonidas Pinkerston set up a blacksmith shop at home, which kept him nearby but Georgia Pinkerston would have survived without him. She had no problem taking charge of the farm. As a second-generation homesteader, she loved to hunt and felt obliged to shoot prairie chickens from her front porch to keep them from eating the sod crop.[73]

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[72] Rannie Eggers, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 283; J. B. Odell, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 49; Owen Creason, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 431; Mrs. O. H. Creason, "First Old Settlers' Reunion, Pioneer Woman Tells of First Settlers," *Sayre Headlight*, June 23, 1930; Heeney, "A Cheyenne Christmas," 69; Eda Elsberry, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 14; Georgia Hancock, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 125-26; Boucher, "Cowboy Leaves Trail for Hammon Home," 73; Marjorye Savage Heeney, "A Cheyenne Christmas," Pioneer Days, Pioneer Days, 69.

[73] Lillie Garrett, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 227; Anna L. Green, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 22-23; J. B. Odell, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 50; Georgia Emma Pinkerston, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 455; Thompson, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 278.

Despite the few opportunities for female work outside the home, some found opportunities within the domestic venue. Delina Thompson took on ironing and laundry for townspeople. She rode a hack nine miles each way and washed until the wee hours of the morning in order to return the clothing the following day. After four years of backbreaking work, she joined her husband on long distance freighting trips and cooked for the men he worked with. Even children earned money to contribute to household survival. One father took his eleven and ten-year old girls to pick cotton with him and another sent his eldest son out during harvest to earn extra money for the family. When the son became ill and returned home, the father left his wife home to tend their crop while he took the boy's place in the harvest circuit. With husbands and sons gone, wives and daughters added handling farm chores to their domestic duties. Women had no problem taking charge, mending fences, feeding the livestock, and bringing in the harvest. Homesteading continually gave them the opportunity to renegotiate their domestic roles because they showed they were capable of doing almost everything their husbands did, but they still clung to the role that society gave them. They created partnerships and complemented each other's duties because they derived a sense of pride from their invaluable assistance that they offered to the success of the farm.[74]

Lula did not write about additional work required for James and that may have had something to do with her network of support. Her father and mother, John and Cora Hall, and her twin sister Lizzie and her husband John Caffee, filed on homesteads and moved to Hammon within the first year of the Morrow's arrival. James parents followed along with two Morrow uncles. All of the family settled within the same vicinity, which provided an excellent network of

[74] Thompson, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 280-8; Males, "Cheyenne, Arapaho Indians," 1.

economic and emotional support. Unlike the early pioneer movements of the mid-nineteenth century, moves into Oklahoma required shorter distances for most people and entire clans made the transition. Typical of the area, families pitched in and supported each other during times of need. Whenever a family needed help, family members left their homes and moved in temporarily with whoever needed additional help.[75]

In 1906, Lula traveled to Weatherford to have a tumor removed from her neck, taking baby Doss, and her eldest daughter Vivian with her to care for Doss. The Hall grandparents moved in to the Morrow home to care for the family in her absence. In 1907, little John Morrow came down with erysipelas, which made him very sick for seven long weeks. The first doctor of Elk City, Dr. M. H. Levi, treated him at home with help from family and Lula said she "burned the light in the window" until he regained his strength. Erysipelas was a skin condition caused by the streptococcus bacteria and came from unclean water sources. Typical treatment in the early twentieth century consisted of applications of quinine or Lothian and the administration of antibiotics, but there are no records to indicate how Dr. Levi treated John. Lula did remember the stir the doctor caused at home when he arrived in his car, "the first motorized buggy, with rubber tires, in Elk City."[76]

Unfortunately, many rural families did not always have immediate access to doctors or the monetary funds to pay for one. Hospitals were rare in the western part of the state in the first decade, and medical treatment was inconsistent. Rural farms averaged at least 160 acres, making them miles apart from neighbors and town. Rebecka Edwards husband and children caught the

[75]Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 2-3.

[76] Ibid.; "Opened for Settlement," www.jcs-group.com/oldwest/towns/opened.html (accessed February 1, 2014).

measles shortly after arrival in Oklahoma forcing her to care for everyone and continue to work the farm. She had to also walk ½ mile from the residence several times each day to get enough water for everyone until they healed. Without money for a doctor, she nursed them all back to health. One of Bettie Monahan's offspring contracted typhoid fever and she remembered caring for the child without assistance from a doctor. After a long illness and numerous prayers to God, the child slowly improved. Monahan credited the survival to her continuous prayers to God for healing and was not the only homesteader that attributed survival of their loved ones to God. Rattlesnake bites were frightening to homesteaders because they meant possible death without some type of medical care and when a rattler bit August Stanka's little girl he did not have money for a physician. His wife prayed over the child who survived the ordeal and Stanka made it clear to his WPA interviewer that his wife's prayers were the sole reason for his child's survival.[77]

There were examples of families like the Morrows who could afford a doctor and had one close by their residence but treatments resulted in mixed success. A rattlesnake also bit Bertie Austin's daughter and she called for the local doctor. Before he arrived, Austin took the advice of a newspaper column, corded the leg and put it in a bucket of coal oil to draw out the poison. The doctor followed that treatment by splitting the foot open in four places and draining the black clotted blood. She described the result of the bite as a three-day binge of "wild" behavior and a pronounced limp for a year, but no lasting damage. Austin did not have the same success with a son whose ear turned black from an unknown infection. She and her husband drove all night looking for a doctor to treat him; the first did not know how to treat the ear and the second

[77] Bettie Monahan, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 31; Rebecka Edwards, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 254; August Stanka, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 440.

kept him in his office for a week and then sent the family home, unsure of the final outcome. Within seven days, her little one started convulsions and died. Fannie Wafer's husband contracted typhoid fever but none of the doctors seemed to know how to treat the disease and he died from lack of knowledge in the medical community. The public pressure to correct this inconsistency would be something that the Oklahoma Medical Association and the Department of Public Health would work toward correcting in the second decade.[78]

Much of the pressure to correct the problems in Oklahoma's medical industry came indirectly through rural women because they were the primary caregivers of their family members and friends. After statehood, they looked to the government to correct the problems associated with physician education and treatment through community conversations that found their way to the state capital. The state's collection and dissemination of information was weak prior to statehood and reflected in the deaths and diseases that plagued Oklahoma. Stories told by individuals in the WPA interviews clearly differed from the reports sent to Washington D.C. by the Western Territorial Board of Health. In 1902, the director boasted of fewer contagions than any other time in Oklahoma's history which was an easy statement to make based on a mere twelve years of history. Still, the accuracy of the statement is questionable for three reasons. First, the state appointed, unpaid district superintendent's numbers were dependent on the reporting of all the physicians in the assigned district over which he or she had no control. Second, the superintendent was not paid and several failed to report to the state superintendent

[78] Fannie Wafer, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 88; Bertie Austin, Indian-Pioneer Papers, 339-40.

consistently and third, the numbers were most likely inaccurate because not all sick people sought a doctor's assistance.[79]

Western Oklahoma Territory's homesteaders spent the first decade of the twentieth century settling in to the farm life. Despite the endless promises to many Native American tribes that Indian Territory was the last stop in the white man's march across the frontier, the Dawes Act gave the president power to force them to allotments and opened the west side of the territory for Anglo settlement. The far western sections offered some of the least favored land, producing a trickle of settlements that lasted through the early 1900s. Men were not the sole occupants but arrived with women and children who would also leave their footprints on the foundations of the new state. Women played a significant part in shaping the social and economic infrastructure as they helped create homes, farms, and communities. A few wives may have been reluctant to move to the territory but it appears from the WPA interviews that most agreed with their husbands that taking advantage of free land was best for their economic futures. They not only cooked, cleaned, cared for the sick, and gave birth to children, but they grew extensive gardens, cared for the stock, and assisted in the fields whenever their husbands needed them. Homesteading provided women with a unique opportunity to establish equality and independence within their relationships because they were not only responsible for taking care of the home and children, but contributed to the economic success of the farm through their numerous contributions.

[79] Dr. E. E. Cowdrick, "Territorial Board of Health," *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma to the Secretary of the Interior for Fiscal Year ended 30 June 1902*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 102.

After women finished their chores on the farm, they concentrated on creating a safe, efficient society that met their needs of their family members. Education for their children was a primary concern and the majority of rural residents wanted their children to have opportunity, which they equated with education. Many also centered their lives on a religious morality that kept their families grounded. The role of wife tended toward nurturing because American society had created this dominance through various social structures like Republican Motherhood and "True Womanhood," but given the opportunity to escape this separation of spheres in homesteading, women clung to the role like a badge of honor. Resilient and adaptable, they became chameleons who cared for a sick child and then went to the pasture to mend a fence. It is too late to ask these homesteading wives why they did not completely renegotiate their gendered roles, but most likely their religion and the power kept them rooted to the domestic role. As long as women lived within the patriarchal structure where white men dominated their lives, having power over the domestic front allowed them to feel in control, resulting in self-respect, pride, and independence. Domesticity helped them gain leadership skills, and the multilayered and overlapping roles on the farm made them invaluable to its success. Husbands and wives, like Lula and James, operated as a unit even when they were apart and rarely made decisions without the assistance or advice of the other.

Lula took pride in her power over the domestic front. In the first ten years, she helped establish a new home for her children and assisted her husband in creating a successful farming venture for their economic survival. She gave birth to five more children, helped create a new church home, and a new school, in addition to caring for sick children and other family members. She raised and cared for the chickens and cows and grew a garden that provided enough produce for extra income and food that got them through the winters. In the next decade

of the twentieth century she would experience loss and illness and would sacrifice much to ensure her children had the best education available. After statehood, Oklahoma had many changes to make but the two most important foundational principles to Lula, also took center stage for the state government. Better health and education to its residents were required in order to provide a better foundation for the young, growing state. Lula found her home with the honey pond and the fritter tree in the first decade and then spent the next ten years protecting it and quietly influencing the new state government to ensure it did the same.[80]

[80] Prescott, *Gender and Generation*, 10-11.

Chapter 3

"It was Our Responsibility": The Education and Welfare of Children, 1910-1920

"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's,
we rob them of tomorrow."
John Dewey

In the second decade of the new century the Morrow's changed their focus from homesteading to improving their children's lives. Land had been plowed and planted, their extended family moved north from Texas for support, and the growing family moved from a dugout to a larger frame home. The family stayed connected and supportive and welcomed the birth of three more children by 1916. Lula devoted considerable energy to the education of her children, writing that she believed it was her responsibility to ensure that each child received the best training available. In 1910, Cheyenne had the closest high school to the Morrow farm but it was too far way for Sterling, the oldest, to attend. The superintendent of Public Instruction had made this problem a priority during his administration and recommended that rural districts consolidate voluntarily but the Morrow's district had voted against it.

Frustrated and heartbroken, it did not stop Lula from finding a solution to education problem of her children. The town of Hammon had planned to open a brand new school for grades K-12 in 1911 and Lula and James decided that the only way they could provide a secondary education to their offspring was to move them to Hammon but it made no sense financially to abandon the farm. The Morrow's did the next best thing by purchasing a home in Hammon where Lula and the children lived during the week. Sterling, their oldest, wanted to farm, prompting him to stay behind and assist James with the farm duties. The Morrow's choice was not unique during the first few decades of the century. Families who had financial success often split temporarily to provide their children with an education. Nettie and Jack Tippens also

recognized the importance of education as it related to their children's futures and they also felt they had no choice but to separate temporarily. Nettie moved her offspring to Clinton for three years until a school was built closer to the farm.[81]

The Morrow's were not the only family forced into this remedy but state administrators had a difficult time convincing rural residents that consolidation was the answer to the shortage of funds available to build new schools. As a new state, Oklahoma administrators and legislatures worked diligently to implement consistent educational guidelines and provide a complete program that equaled those provided in already established states. The shortage of high schools was one of the most pressing problems facing the Superintendent of Public Instruction, R. H. Wilson, and he firmly believed the consolidation of districts would solve that problem. He had received reports from several states that had consolidated successfully with less costs, safer buildings, and student transportation. However, Oklahoma's rural communities were used to doing things with minimal government intervention; they feared additional costs and viewed the liberal ideas of Wilson with wariness. The Oklahoma State Board of Education tried to alleviate concerns in 1911 and issued its first of many bulletins to the rural school districts of the state, but districts viewed the information with wariness.[82]

Even though Wilson and Oklahoma's rural residents supported the same goal of educating all children, they did not agree with his progressive ideas that matched the prevailing thought of most of the national state educators of the era. The writings of Jane Addams and John

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[81] Ancestry.com, "1910 Census Kiowa District," http://interactive.ancestry.com/7884/4449954_ 00193/153482822?backurl=http://person.ancestry com/tree/42540013/person/19808040723/facts/citation/155088618800/edit/record (accessed 4 February 2016); Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 4-6; Tom Ed Tippens, "A Tribute to the Tippens Family, 100 Years," in Pioneer Days, Hammon History," 120.

[82] Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation, A Bulletin of Information* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1912), 3-4.

Dewey that children were individuals and should be taught to break free of their parents did not find universal appeal among farming districts. Many homesteaders based their economic success on the teamwork structure and viewed the concept as a key to the destruction of their very livelihoods. Wilson knew he had an uphill battle with philosophical differences, which prompted him to make concessions in order to win the approval of the rural districts. He outwardly accepted their initial rejection of consolidation in favor of producing a harmonious relationship between the state and local districts, thinking that he would be able to convince districts to follow his lead after he established their trust. He also needed to buy time to encourage the legislature to provide the funds necessary to achieve his inward goal of 100 percent consolidation.[83]

Consolidation offered multiple benefits to rural schools, which included better grading; more effective teachers; a transportation system for rural students; and better supervision of the districts. Instruction above the eighth grade was not only the way of the future but necessary for Oklahoma to achieve a leadership position in the country. Wilson used the Massachusetts's consolidation program as a model because it was the first state in the country to experiment with district merging and had shown great success since 1874. Their transportation system had enabled children to stay close to home and receive instruction in the higher grades, resulting in regular attendance and cost savings to parents, but it was also one of Wilson's greatest hurdles. He recommended that districts purchase wagons with enough space for fifteen to twenty children (with space for a heating apparatus in winter) and hire either a resident or a student to drive the vehicles. Once school boards purchased the vehicles, there was only a minimal expense to pay

[83] Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 109-11; Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation*, 3-4.

for drivers and minor repairs but Oklahoma's rural farming community were not convinced of the minimal financial cost.

In addition to the benefit of transportation, consolidation allowed districts more control over and better placement of teachers. Local school boards could pool them by education, age, and experience, and subsequently pair them with their corresponding student level, which would also result in more interesting and applicable topics of instruction. More engaged students equated to an increase in retention level and interest in schools as a natural gathering place for the "social, intellectual, and industrial life of the neighborhood." Sixty percent of the population lived in rural districts pursuing agricultural ventures. Wilson and these residents shared the same goal of providing a standard of excellence to the rural school system but his biggest obstacle was convincing them that high school was not just a precursor to university education, but a necessary part of their children's futures. Even if they expected their children to follow in their footsteps on the farm, they needed a secondary education to compete in the marketplace.[84]

Wilson encouraged consolidation as the best solution for rural districts to receive secondary schools, but it was only one of the three different plans provided by the state legislation. The other two plans involved county and township high schools. The state school board authorized the latter in 1891 and repealed it in 1893 as a failure. Legislatures structured the system with four district boards that would operate a school placed in the middle of a township. Getting four different organizations to agree on anything must have seemed impossible to local school boards because they never constructed schools under this provision. Even though the proposed organization failed, it did produce the lasting legacy of a three mile square common

[84] Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation*, 5-7, 9; Frank A. Balyeat, "County High Schools in Oklahoma." *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 37 (Spring 1959),

township. The county high school law of 1901 tried to distribute the expenses of a high school more evenly without undue tax burdens to residents. Five county high schools operated between 1903 and 1935 and they also provided transportation to those students in the outlying districts that could reach the school daily. The students who lived too far outside the district had to move into town and board during the week, returning to their homes on the weekends. Many of the students did light housekeeping in exchange for rent, or their mothers moved into town with them as Lula did with her children. Resident approval usually failed because the businessmen of the town expecting to receive the high school were generally too eager and caused mistrust among outside residents. Woods County had established a county high school but the approval won by a narrow margin of 2,509 to 2,104 partially because commissioners had the right, within the law, to locate the school where one was not already located. As many residents had feared, one official induced the other two to locate the high school in Helena. He expected to gain financially from business holdings in the small town, which was miles away from most residents in the county. The first class enrolled a small population of seven students and even though six of the seven graduated, the class was deemed too small to justify its operation as a county school. Selfish political control doomed the school to closure.[85]

The past experiences of districts and counties hurt the possibilities of future consolidations despite the advantages a high school education offered children. Officials had a difficult time convincing farmers that their offspring's future depended on the level of education they received. Multiple generations in some families had always farmed and they expected their children to follow in their footsteps. They had never needed a secondary education and failed to see the need of one for their offspring but nationwide, an increase in salaries through

[85] Ibid., 195-7, 203-5.

industrialization had lured many rural residents to urban areas for work, resulting in a farming decline and an urban rise of the middle class. Many rural Oklahoma residents just could not foresee the possible changes their children faced and repeatedly voted against consolidation. Lula and James found themselves in the minority in the Kiowa district, certain their children's futures depended on the level of their education. They understood several of the complexities that faced their offspring in the twentieth century. The frontier was closed and Oklahoma was the last state to offer homesteading opportunities on free land. Their children would have to purchase land if they chose to farm, which was a difficult profession requiring faith and perseverance in the lean years. They also needed to have something to fall back on and encouraged them to attend normal schools and obtain teaching certificates or get training in a trade school. The numerous women, like Lula, who moved to town with their children were making their mark on the future whether they won immediate elections to consolidate or not. Their educated children and grandchildren would have a better chance at economical survival as they passed down the gift of knowledge given to them by their parents. Lula encouraged her neighbors and friends to offer their children the same opportunities, but most failed to anticipate the future and voted against consolidation.

The possibility of a tax increase created one of the biggest hurdles to overcome because farmers had great difficulty seeing beyond the next harvest when they lived economically from crop to crop. Many of Wilson's arguments failed to convince rural residents of the need for a high school because he seemed oblivious to their concerns. He not only ignored the fact that bonds increasing local taxes generally accompanied merger approval, but the non-economic benefits that he enumerated did not help their survival. After initial purchase of the wagons and the erection of the new, safer building, he argued that students not only benefited from a system

that got them to school on time, but it extended attendance from three months to nine months. That was a deterrent to many rural residents because it took the family farmhands away from harvest, which was time sensitive, requiring the immediate labor of every family member. The superintendent needed a better argument about the value of tomorrow but instead he leaned on the reports of other states with large rural populations who had consolidated. He played right into the farmer's argument that living in the country was better for their children when he agreed that the farm was still the most desirable place to bring up children by quoting a report from the state of Nebraska:

> "Under this system the farm becomes the ideal place to bring up children enabling them to obtain the advantages enjoyed by our centers of population, and yet to spend their evenings and holiday time in the country under the constant, wholesome and tender care of father and mother as they gather around the fireside after supper, and in contact with nature and plenty of work instead of idly loafing about town."

If the farm was the best place to bring up children, why bother with an education? Parents had plenty of work to keep their children busy and school merely interfered with the workload in addition to taking precious dollars away from survival.[86]

Farming in America in the early 1900s, not only offered self-sustenance and economic success, but it also provided the perfect opportunity for raising children who understood Christian moral values and the ethic of hard work. Both Lula and James grew up in this environment and wanted the same for their children when they moved to their homestead in 1900. Some of the new values of the Progressive Era that encouraged bigger government and secular belief systems were dangerous to many rural families because they did not trust the authorities and did not want the schools teaching morality to their children. Progressives tried to

[86] Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation*, 15-20, 23; J. E. Bennett, *Oklahoma Tax Code* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing, Inc., 1918), 195.

encourage farmers to trade their supposed singular, isolated lifestyles for organized cooperation through the Country Life Movement but it failed because its organizers were not farmers but middle class educated reformers who misunderstood the people they were trying to change. The farmers of western Oklahoma did not necessarily believe in individualism as the movement suggested, as evidenced through the communities they created when they first settled on their homesteads and their mistrust of Wilson's belief that children needed to be taught to break away from their parents. Mother and father were equal partners over the farm and their children, and society charged them with raising useful citizens who knew God, family, and community in that order. They prepared their children for a future by first teaching them the value of working within a team followed by preparation for a life away from home as they prepared for marriage and supporting their own families.[87]

Many people chose the agrarian lifestyle because they saw the country as an opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency and a better place to raise children, which was further supported in 1901 in Elk City. In what seems like an odd move, the town's saloon owners paid for the first school in order to keep children off the street, which further enforced the idea that farm work for children was viewed as positive. The progressive thought of the early twentieth century focused on children and their employment as physical abuse, but most rural parents viewed the assistance of their children on the farm as a lesson in work ethic not abuse. Gertrude Flesher said the experience of growing up on a farm allowed her parents to teach all of their children the value of hard work, and even though they also valued education, the training they received on the farm kept each one of her siblings continuously employed despite the difficulties of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Too much government involvement frightened many agrarians

[87] McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent*, 106-7.

who held on to their districts with a fierce protectiveness that made them look like individualists but in reality it was a mistrust of political authority. Federal and local government had done little for them and they feared the benefits touted as cost savings were merely an exaggeration of numbers. The Morrow's were just as concerned about their children's future as the sustainability of their farm and were not alone with their focus on education, just not in the majority. Other families struggled with the same issues and some like the Cherry family chose to sell their farm and purchase one in Colorado where their son could attend high school and the family would still remain together. [88]

A shortage of teachers in rural school districts worked against Wilson's reduction in costs theory because his suggestions to remedy the problem involved additional expense. He recommended that school boards build housing for their instructors on the school site arguing that keeping them close was a benefit well worth the cost. They would be available for organizing community activities; hosting social meetings; attending impromptu staff meetings; and acting as a deterrent to potential property debasement or theft. In theory, the superintendent's suggestion sounded good because it was mostly a fixed, one time cost, but it meant different housing for single and married teachers, which potentially duplicated the costs. Rural districts also had to face the fact that they would still have to raise salaries because they barely paid a living wage to most of their teachers. The industrial revolution's lure of men to urban areas had been blamed on the continued vacancies of the lower teaching tiers along with the loss of single women who generally married within the first few years and were encouraged to leave their positions. Teaching was impractical for rural women like Lula because after marriage they added

[88] Lynn Kennemer, ed., Elk City, Rising from the Prairie (Elk City: Western Oklahoma Historical Society, 2007), 25, 87, 91; Gertrude Flesher, "James M. Clay," in *Prairie Wedding*, Jerry R. Dickson, ed. (Elk City: Western Oklahoma Historical Society), 91.

child rearing, gardening, animal husbandry, farming, and running a household to their responsibilities, leaving little to no free time for outside employment. Single women and those with urban backgrounds filled the openings in rural school district. They initially agreed to accept lower pay than their male counterparts, which saved district's funds in the immediate future, but the continuing decline of male teachers brought a necessary change of increased salaries for women.[89]

In addition to teacher's salaries, one of the last financial handicaps of consolidation involved the cost of books and libraries. Most rural schools did not have libraries and students often shared textbooks, because there were no funds for those expenses. State legislators responded to the problem by passing a law that required schools to purchase reading material for libraries. In larger schools, legislation forced administrators to set aside no more than ten and no less than five dollars, per teacher per year, which would have increased expenses considerably, but in districts of less than one and no more than four teachers, the total expenditure was no less than twenty and no more than fifty dollars per year, making the expense more manageable. School officials could accept private donations for additional books, supplies, and any other equipment needed for the library, but barely one-fifth of the districts in the state had added anything to the libraries by the end of the 1915 school year. With a total of 495,722 pupils, only 333,119 books existed, leaving the libraries with an average of less than one book per student enrolled. Nonconsolidated rural schools that barely paid their teachers a living wage had ignored the law successfully but a merger meant enforcement, adding another line item to the budget.[90]

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[89] Elizabeth Boyle, "The Feminization of Teaching in America," *MIT Program in Women's & Gender Studies*, https://stuff.mit.edu/afs/athena.mit.edu/org/w/wgs/prize/eb04.html (accessed 2 March 2016); Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation*, 26, 28.

[90] Ibid., 28-29.

The Morrows lived with the reality in 1910 that they were in the voting minority in their district and if they wanted their children to obtain a secondary education, Lula had to move to Hammon with the children. As already stated, she believed it was her responsibility to make sure her children had the best opportunities and she saw education as the key to their future, which would look different than the world she and James grew up in. It is important to note here that the Oklahoma legislature periodically gave women the vote in local matters and this was one of those cases. Lula took the responsibility seriously, and as previously mentioned, tried to encourage her fellow rural farmers to approve a merger of four districts. Even though she lost the vote, it did not stop her from finding another way to make sure her children received the highest level of education affordable to them. Consolidation offered rural school children transportation to the nearest school and without it the Morrow children could not attend because the high school in Hammon was too distant to reach by buggy daily. James and Lula had enough money saved to purchase a home in town and she moved with the children two days before Christmas in 1911. City officials built a brand new three-story school for twelve grades and 200 students. It opened one week after the Morrow family arrival, with six teachers, four women and two men. The Morrow's resided between two residences, continuing to maintain the farm where James spent most of his time, while Lula cared for the children in town going home on the weekends to pick up food and take care of her farm duties.[91]

The early twentieth century was an important time for public education and even though many parents fought against consolidation, there were many others who had not received but

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[91] Ibid., 28-9; Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 4; Hodge, "History of Hammon," Pioneer Days 12; J. H. Karr, "Consolidated Schools," *The Herald Sentinel*, April 20, 1911; "A Change in the School Law," *The Herald Sentinel*, April 1, 1911.

wanted an education, prompting the Department of Public Instruction to search for ways to reach those individuals and foreign born residents. Society reformation was a major goal in Oklahoma and education was not just important for children. Adults could be reached through their offspring and night schools offered them direct courses with a goal of making the state 100 percent literate. Teachers introduced new concepts to their students, like money management and thrift, and the importance of the Good Roads movement. One school's support involved students in the construction of better roadways, teaching them construction skills and also introducing the importance of a new infrastructure to their parents who could see the value of the work their children completed in the project. Schools also cooperated with farmers by giving credit to students for work done from home when they were needed on the farm in an effort to create a sense of mutual cooperation within the community and prevent disruption within the school years' lesson plans. New agricultural techniques taught in high schools also made their way home creating a more intimate connection between the home and the school. To further help adults, the Department of Public Instruction created Moonlight Schools (night school for adults), which encouraged literacy, English language, and civic instruction. The modern, progressive school curriculum resulted in a better awareness between adults, their children, and the society around them. The superintendent was very proud of his efforts to reach the adult population and saved many letters from emotional men and women grateful for some new skill they learned either in the Moonlight School or through their children. One man had never attended school as a child, spending his entire life illiterate, but through the adult night program he had learned how to read and saw an entirely new world in his future, which changed his view about the importance of education for his children.[92]

[92] Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Rural School Consolidation*, 30-1.

Wilson succeeded in his attempt to bring education to the adult population but he had a difficult time making districts understand how badly new buildings were needed for the health and well-being of children. He blamed the standard box style school building that dotted the rural landscape for the spread of numerous contagious diseases prompting him to recommend the legislature take action by passing two laws; one requiring any school district using public funds to build according to safer specifications, and another that would address health problems in children as early as possible by creating a relationship between the Departments of Public Instruction and Health. The medical community had released a report to state superintendents that indicated the majority of "backward or retarded" children had physical defects, which caused them to repeat grades or fail and a simple examination by a medical doctor could identify defects, which could then be corrected through a simple operation. This health assessment offered a two-fold solution; it would not only save the district a tremendous amount of money by ending the expenditure of repeating grades, but it would also end the child's difficulties in school. Once problems were identified, school administration would determine a plan of action, report to the Department of Public Instruction, and enforce a system of rules to ensure parents protected the general public. The well meaning intentions of the superintendent just meant more government intrusion in the personal lives of rural residents who did not want some government official telling them how to care for their children.[93]

Despite the public's refusal to support Wilson's safer school building campaign, the superintendent refused to give up. He turned his focus to his teaching force, hoping to convince them that a safe working environment was a necessity. He used one of his female county superintendents, Mrs. Hattie G. Bush, as the example to follow. She understood the dangers of

[93] Ibid., 8-9, 26.

buildings with poor ventilation and had required all her districts to build schools according to the safer specifications. Bush was one of seventeen females and one of the five married women hired as district superintendents in 1916. Wilson bravely used the opportunity to give a woman special credit for her insight and support of his ideas when he could have been highly criticized for his support of married women in the workplace. The rise of progressivism, in the early twentieth century, provided females with new opportunities in particular economic venues like education, but many men still viewed the home as the women's place and did not appreciate the competition in an economic sphere that they had dominated for centuries.

Equal pay and promotional opportunities for women were far from common in the 1910s and statistical tables in the final section of Wilson's report displayed the inequality between the genders in 1916. Women consisted of 64.7 percent of the total teacher distribution in rural Oklahoma, 72.7 percent in rural districts, and as high as 80.5 percent in the independent districts. Despite their domination, salaries for men exceeded those of the women in every certification salary grade. Districts classified teachers in three different grades and those women with a number one grade, in the cities, made 61percent of the men's salaries, 64 percent in the villages, and 94 percent in rural districts. As the grade certification dropped, the gap closed but women still made less than men despite their equivalent accreditation. The counties with the largest gaps between the two genders were Bryan (SE), Cotton (SC), Harmon (SW), LeFlore (SE), Mayes (NE), McClain (C), Nowata (NE), Sequoyah (CE), and Woodward (NW).[94]

[94] Oklahoma State Board of Education & R. H. Wilson, *Sixth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Together with the Third Report of the State Board of Education 1916* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1916), 8-10, 20, 25, 197, 233, 243 249-50.

It is difficult to ascertain why these particular counties paid women so much less. There was no generic connection in financial fluidity, location, or number of months taught. In the following table, the counties are listed in order by their financial fluidity from the poorest to the wealthiest and yet the poorest county paid their women a little better than the a few of the top tier counties.

1916 Sampling of Teachers Salaries in Oklahoma Counties

County	***Male Salaries***	***Female Salaries***	***%-Women to Men***	***Term Length***
Nowata	$104.82	$69.88	67%	8.6 mos.
Bryan	$102.00	$63.11	62%	8.4 mos.
Mayes	$104.87	$63.11	58%	8.7 mos.
LeFlore	$108.11	$67.95	63%	7.4 mos.
Sequoyah	$104.50	$55.00	53%	7.3 mos.
McClain	$102.91	$61.00	59%	8.2 mos.
Cotton	$100	$65.00	65%	6.7 mos.

[95]

Not one single factor stood out that explained the reason for the large discrepancies between male and female pay. On average, city districts paid the lowest salaries with women averaging 62 percent of men's salaries and rural areas closing the gap at 83 percent.[96]

1916 Sampling of Teachers Salaries in Oklahoma Counties

County	***Male Salaries***	***Female Salaries***	***% Women to Men***
Pushmataha	$76.79	$67.99	88.5%
Beaver	$60.00	$64.00	1.06%
Cimarron	$56.43	$59.09	1.05%
Logan	$74.90	$75.15	1.003%

The above table shows that not all was lost for women in Oklahoma with one district paying women 88.5 percent of the average man's wages and three paying over 100 percent. In

[95] Ibid., 234, 245-6.
[96] Ibid, 242-3, 245-6.

1916, a few women had achieved places of prominence in the education field, and the Oklahoma Education Association went as far as electing a female president, Mrs. Susan R. Fordyce, but there is no good explanation for the better pay structure in the above listed counties. Pushmataha and Beaver both had male superintendents. One was married to a teacher, but the other was single, not marrying until 1922, even though he also married a teacher. Cimarron and Logan both had female superintendents but Cimarron's sparse community only had four teachers who were likely female. Logan County is the only one that likely shows a superintendent who encouraged equal gender pay, Miss Margaret Doolittle supervised four male and three female principals in a rather large district with eighty-eight teachers.[97]

The Morrow's home county of Roger Mills had a female superintendent in 1916, but Lula had moved home to farm in 1915. She continued to support consolidation because she had more children that would also need a high school education in a few years, but nothing had changed with the rest of the residents in Kiowa district. By 1918, the superintendent reported that the rural schools continued to be the "weakest link in the educational chain" and he hired an assistant superintendent devoted strictly to the rural districts. Wilson complained that the numerous school boards made it difficult to change anything because few shared his vision. Enrollment was slightly down from 87.5 percent in 1917 to 84.6 and daily attendance dropped from 55 percent in 1917 to 51 percent in 1918 and he blamed part of the attendance problem on the weak compulsory education law. It did not contain a provision for enforcement and it was

[97] Ibid.," 243; Oscar William Davison, "Education at Statehood," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 28 (Spring 1950), 54; Joseph Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma, Vol. 5* (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, 1916), 1994-5; R. H. Wilson, *Oklahoma Educational Directory, 1916-1917* (Oklahoma City: Franklin Printing Co.,1916), 5, 8, 15, 20; Pushmataha County Marriage Listings, 1921-24, http://www.usgennet .org/usa/ok/county/pushmataha/MarBk5_P.html (accessed March 21, 2016).

poorly worded only requiring parents to send their children to school two-thirds of the year without preference as to which one-third they did not have to attend. Many farming parents kept their children in the fields until early winter, which disrupted any organization the teachers hoped to have established and many students often gave up playing catch up to lesson plans and quit. Wilson had failed in his efforts to convince rural areas to consolidate and as long as he concentrated on costs and not future economic value, farming children would miss out on a high school education.[98]

Wilson sounded frustrated in 1918, and no matter how positive he tried to spin things, the numbers in the rural districts gave signs of deterioration. Enrollment was down in the white and black sectors from the previous year and unexcused absences were out of control. He proposed a law intended to support the creation of a supervising county board of education with expansive administrative and discretionary powers because giving too much freedom to districts only ended in lack of control and refusal to cooperate. High school numbers showed that most students in the rural districts failed to continue their education beyond the ninth grade, despite the addition of vocational and industrial work. The voluntary consolidation system had become a problem because it created island communities for some districts who no longer had adjoining districts with which to join, and gaps had spread between independent and rural schools with the former spending $98.68 per child as compared to the $18.39 spent in the latter. Little progress had been made on medical exams or the new construction of safer school buildings and Wilson had now gone past caring about creating harmony within the rural districts. He recommended a medical

[98] R. H Wilson & President of State Board of Education, *Seventh Biennial Report State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Together with the Fourth Report of the State Board of Education, Oklahoma 1918* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Board of Education, 1918), 10-13.

inspection law again, certain that it was possible to physically repair the "malingering" student and prevent years of criminal behavior and the resulting incarceration. Wilson's efforts at earning trust, believing he could convince every district in the state to follow his lead, fell apart.[99]

The superintendent still managed a few successes and in 1918 teacher salaries increased across the board. Men's average wage per month rose to $107.28 in rural districts for grade number one certification but even more amazing was the rise to $110.54 per month for women, exceeding the salaries of their male counterparts. The number of elected female superintendents also rose from seventeen to twenty-four. It is an interesting development since the future in 1909 looked very bleak for female teachers in the Oklahoma economic sector. State Superintendent E. H. Cameron predicted something quite different that year at the State Teachers' Convention in Oklahoma City, when he spoke about the addition of domestic science in the schools. He was certain it would arrest the "wild wave of restlessness" that had overtaken the women of the country and bring them back to the domestic sphere under which they were intended to dwell. This obvious, glaring male opinion of separate spheres declined and gained strength multiple times over the next four decades but in the first ten years of the twentieth century, breaking free of domesticity looked bleak. Cameron had obviously hoped that simply by offering domestic science in the schools, women would not only want to marry but also enjoy domesticity more than ever before. His solution offered an end to the high divorce rates that plagued Oklahoma, implying that is must have been the woman's fault because she did not enjoy the domestic sciences. Perhaps that comment emboldened them further to pursue a higher education and teaching jobs that provided them with equal pay but more likely it was a combination of changes

[99] Ibid., 15, 17, 19, 23-4, 31.

that opened the door for women. WWI took more human capital than the nation could give and was forced to look to women to fill new positions in the economy. In 1918, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Education published a letter to farm families that was positive as it encouraged wives to pursue outside education so they would understand the farm business, but was also condescending because it assumed they did not already know the farms they had built with their husbands. Most farm wives had handled as much or more of the business than their husbands and had achieved an equal partnership within the farm long before WWI but the report opened the door for acceptance of this equality and encouraged both women and their children to pursue a higher education in all fields in case they were needed to fill jobs vacated by the draft. The importance of women in every economic sector became very real with the war and women rose to the challenge, afterward earning themselves the right to vote in all elections and new work outside the home in a few different fields.[100]

The U.S. may have entered a war, and women may have sensed a change for their perceived position in society, but in rural Oklahoma little had changed. Many farmers did not see the value of education for their children, still needed them as farm hands, and had not softened toward district consolidation. E. A. Duke, the rural superintendent, had a busy two years devoted to centralization of the rural school districts, but had no more success than his boss. His report lacked any substance except for his admission that there was an increased demand for competent teachers, which required salary increases across the board, and that there was a shortage of male teachers for special subjects. Men not only failed to pursue teaching as a vocation but more

[100] Ibid., 163-4; Davison, "Education at Statehood," 70; "Oklahoma State Teachers Associations in Great Annual Convention at Oklahoma City," *Oklahoma State Registry*, December 30, 1909, 1; "Department of Interior Bureau of Education," *State Sentinel*, 3 October 1918, 4.

females than males were completing the eighth grade and graduating from high school and had been since 1916. In 1918, 2,938 boys completed the eighth grade as opposed to 4,063 girls and similarly, 1,053 boys graduated from high school compared to the 2,126 girls.[101]

Oklahoma was not the only state concerned about the problems in education, and the National Education Association (NEA) completed a study in 1918 that looked at teacher's salaries to see if they were adequate and if not, were they to blame for the nationwide shortage of teachers. The committee found twenty-nine states guilty of paying below an adequate wage, which included the state of Oklahoma whose administrators paid 35 percent below an adequate wage. These low wages also led the committee to indirectly blame WWI for the shortage and lack of tenured teachers because jobs created to fill material war needs paid considerably higher salaries. The committee that included three women, generously and graciously stated that women should not be paid any less than three-fourths of the man's salaries even though pay for women was a heavily discussed issue that the entire country debated in the early twentieth century. In 1910, Grace Charlotte Strachan devoted 587 pages to the topic in her *Equal Pay for Equal Work: The Story of the Struggle for Justice Being Made,* which she wrote to convince the New York legislatures to pass a law, already on the floor, designed to provide same wages for teachers in the state. In 1913, the U.S. Congress held a hearing before the Committee on Rules that looked at creating a group to study the issue of female suffrage, and unequal teaching wages arose in the argument for suffrage. The teacher's union came to Oklahoma in 1914, and on its agenda was equal pay for men and women engaged in the same work. The following year, the Socialist Convention also adopted the measure and the *Oklahoma Journal of Education V* discussed the issue in 1916. It is important to note that the wording of equal pay for equal work allowed

[101] Wilson, *Seventh Biennial Report*, 39, 57.

employers to give men additional responsibilities that justified lower pay and failed to change anything significant, but it is important to show that with suffrage, new items for female equality would be introduced and it was through education that women made such a large impact.[102]

Female teachers in Oklahoma achieved a milestone in 1918, but education for rural families continued to be inconsistent until the 1930s when consolidation hit a high point. Very few rural farmers had the financial success of the Morrows and could not offer their children an education past the third grade. After four years in Hammon to help her children obtain high school instruction, Lula and family returned to the homestead to concentrate on farming and raising the younger children but she moved back to Hammon in 1923 for the youngest offspring. District merging did not hit a high point in Western Oklahoma until the 1930s, when a net migration took place that resulted from the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Reduced student enrollment and taxable income forced multiple districts to merge, but they held on to their community identities until financial circumstances forced them into consolidation.[103]

The education problems that faced Oklahoma rural communities existed in both white and black schools and it is obvious from the statistics that sufficient education needs were not being met in the black schools. African Americans had settled mainly in the east and central portion of the state and were forced into poorly funded facilities managed by the Department of

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[102] National Education Association of the United States, *Teachers' Salaries and Cost of Living; the Report of the Committee on Teachers' Salaries, Tenure, and Pensions July 1918* (Washington DC: The National Education Association, 1918), 1, 4, 49, 65, 67, 221, 489; Hearing Before the Committee on Rules, H. R. Doc. No. 754, 63 Cong. 2 Sess., *Resolution Establishing a Committee on Woman Suffrage*, 1913 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1914), 172-3; "Oklahoma Teacher Welcomed by Organized Labor," *The Oklahoma Labor Unit*, 7 November 1914, 1; "Would Curtail Court's Power," *Farmer and Laborer*, 1 January 1915, 1.

[103] Morrow, Grandma's Diary, 5, 7; Joe Bard, Clark Gardener, and Regi Wieland, "Rural School Consolidation Report, History Research Summary Conclusions and Recommendations, April 1-2, 2005," http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED497049.pdf (accessed Jan 15, 2016), 4.

Public Instruction, and the State Board of Education. Oklahoma achieved the separate but equal concept of *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, but it did not appear by literacy numbers that equality was in place or enforced. In Oklahoma Territory in 1907, the total black population was 4.3 percent and by 1920 the total had grown to 7.8 percent, with 6.8 percent living in rural districts. Illiteracy rates were the highest for blacks, the lowest in the ten to fifteen-year age category showing 6.1 percent illiterate (down from 7.1 percent in 1910) compared to 1.6 percent (previously 1.8 percent in 1910) in the native born white category. Adult illiteracy for the rural black population was down to 19.5 percent in 1920 from 26.3 percent, but it was hardly close to the white native-born rate of 3.8 percent, and the white foreign born at 14.3 percent.[104]

Relatively small numbers of African Americans lived in western Oklahoma and none lived in Roger Mills (home of Hammon) or Beaver County in 1920. The highest number of blacks lived in Kiowa County, in the southwest portion of the state, totaling 1.7 percent of the population with an illiteracy percentage of 21.6. Attendance numbers were also consistently lower with 70.3 percent of blacks attending school as compared to 85.4 percent of native-born whites. These statistics support the argument that it does not appear they received equal opportunity to the native and foreign born whites. Even their funding numbers were considerably less than the white schools and homes for the disabled.[105]

In 1916, the governor provided the State University (University of Oklahoma) with $253,500 in state funding, compared to the Colored Agricultural and Normal University, which received $46,300. The Institution for the Deaf, Blind, and Colored Orphans received a paltry sum

[104] Wilson, *Seventh Biennial Report*, 7; U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Summary for the United States, By Division and States Population, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/06229686v32-37ch5.pdf (accessed Jan 15, 2016), 28-30.

[105] U.S. Bureau of the Census, "Summary… Division and States Population," 38, 36, 49.

$25,666 compared to the $107,909 given to the School for the Blind, the School for the Deaf, and the State Home. That same year, the University of Oklahoma received funding for a new science building in the amount of $100,000 and the colored school in Langston received $7,371 for a mechanical building. The Langston curriculum focused on industry, which included teaching, agriculture, farming, and cooking. The school's slogan was "Learn by Doing," and emphasized the idea that work was dignifying and cultural. The curriculum was hardly equal to that provided at the University of Oklahoma which included law, engineering, fine arts, pharmacy, mining, and nursing, among other things. The State Board provided a minimal report on Langston compared to the other schools of higher education, lacking information on curriculum, breakdown by county, and courses of study.[106]

Numerous problems plagued the education system in Oklahoma through the second decade of the twentieth century, which included not only problems of equality between men, women, and other races but also a lack of understanding about the importance of a high school education for rural residents. Lula focused on providing her children with an education because she foresaw the value in the changing environment. Not all of her children would farm and even if they did, they would benefit from an education. The frontier was really closed in the early 1900s, not 1890 as suggested by the Census Bureau, with the last of homesteads settled in western Oklahoma Territory. Farming was on the decline nationwide with industrialization, which offered higher salaries in urban areas and the opportunity to join the growing middle class. Despite the impending changes, neither Lula or Superintendent Wilson convinced her Kiowa district neighbors to consolidate, but she still made an impact on the future of education. By supporting the secondary education of their own, they provided their offspring with the skills

[106] Oklahoma State Board of Education, *Sixth Biennial Report*, 79-80, 137.

necessary to survive the Depression and the Dust Bowl as adults, remaining employed through some of the most difficult years of the economy. The Morrow children continued their mother's legacy of stressing the importance of education with their children and their grandchildren. Lula fortunately had the financial means to purchase a home in Hammon and move temporarily with her children while James stayed at the farm but she could have just as easily stayed on the farm and blamed her district for a loss at the political polls and failure to provide her family with an educated future.

In the end, Wilson failed to convince the residents of 5,000 district to consolidate. He made two mistakes; first, he did not require consolidation and second, he concentrated on costs rather than focusing on the value of an education. Farmers hung on to their independent districts because they could not see the future and Wilson was unable to articulate the foreseeable changes in the American economy. Many of those who had relied on the agrarian economy found themselves wandering the Southwest to find work during the Depression and the Dust Bowl because they only knew how to farm. The failure of their parents to see beyond their immediate needs and the foreseeable changes of the future, left them decades behind the educated and struggling to find work and food in some of the most difficult economic times of the country's history.

Lula wanted change for the better and looked to the government to play a role in her children's education. Despite their loss at the political polls, she and James circumvented their neighbors and found a way to provide a secondary education to their children. Lula continually showed her passion, her strength, and resilience by refusing to abandon her children's future. She and James spent their hard earned money on a second home and separated for four years in an effort to give their offspring the best possible future, and within this independence and equality

Lula continued to take pride in her role as mother. The fine line of domesticity remained blurred during this separation because both she and James maintained separate households. The Morrows had developed an equal partnership. They separated their duties based on their abilities, came together to handle tasks, and handled the primary duties of the other when necessary.

This notion of equality began to make a small appearance in the economic sector of Oklahoma by the late 1910s through its teaching force. Anglo female teachers received equal pay to men in multiple districts, and held positions of authority before and after marriage. For African Americans, civil equality was still several decades away. *Plessy v. Ferguson* created an excuse for Anglos to pretend they had created equal facilities but the state of Oklahoma failed miserably to fund appropriately or provide challenging educational environments for people of color. African American teachers did not receive equal pay to that of white teachers in 1918. Despite the problems within the system, Lula Morrow's focus on education allowed a small window into the problems and successes of education during a great decade of impending change. Lula and James passed their progressive attitude of focusing on their children's futures through education, down to subsequent generations who carried the legacy forward into the twenty-first century.

Chapter 4

Loss and Survival: Healthcare and Faith, The Road to Consistency, Better Treatments, Hope, and Equal Partnerships 1910-1920

Education took center stage in Lula's life during the second decade but her desire to ensure that her children received the best chance at a good future was not her only concern. Multiple loved ones contracted serious illnesses and the entire family experienced the painful loss of two lives very dear to them. Rural living in the 1910s was slowly improving with the installation of telephone lines; electricity; sewage; clean water; and better roadways, which greatly improved the lives of the agrarian, but Oklahoma was still an infant state trying to establish some consistency within the fields of medical and public health. In the summer of 1911, before the move to Hammon, six-year old Louis Doss contracted typhoid fever. In the same year, Lula gave birth to little Jessie and even though she remembered every marriage and baptism of her offspring, she never made any reference to her pregnancies or the births of her children. She had her first child in 1896, two years after her marriage to James, and had the twelfth in 1916 at the age of forty-three; the equivalent of one child every eighteen months. Her silence is a little perplexing about the births but since she wrote the memoir at the request of her children, perhaps she either felt the subject was a little to personal to share with them or after the birth of twelve children it was merely a normal part of her life and not worth mentioning. The life after birth was what she wanted her family to remember. Tragedy first struck the family in May of 1914, when three-year old Jessie tried to help with the laundry and fell into a washbasin full of boiling water. It scalded her so severely she died from her injuries, and was the first to be buried at the Red Hill Cemetery in Hammon where James and Lula were also laid to rest at the

end of their lives. The final tragedy of the decade came with the flu epidemic of 1918-19 and the loss of Sterling's wife Ruth.[107]

The medical community could do little to save Jessie's life in 1914 for several reasons. The accident occurred at the homestead and the Morrow's still depended on horse and buggy for communication and transportation. They had not purchased their first car until 1920, and even though there were phone lines in town as early as the first decade, they did not reach the farm until after 1915. In addition, doctors lived in the neighboring towns, averaging ten to fifteen miles from the nearest farm, and hospitals were glorified doctor's offices in the small communities of Roger Mill County. The closest institution was the Frances Hospital in Elk City, which was seventeen miles south of Hammon. Oklahoma had been a state for a mere seven years and its government was still trying to organize the medical community. Consistency regarding reporting and treatment had improved but still had a long way to go. Treating severe burns during this era was rudimentary and would have required immediate attention. None of the journals for the Oklahoma State Medical Association contained articles on the treatment of burns between 1912-1920, which makes it likely that making the individual comfortable was the best thing a doctor could do for the patient. The newly created State Department of Public Health worked hard putting guidelines in place that protected the public from the various diseases that plagued the state of Oklahoma but it could not change the fact that many of its physicians had minimal training. Prior to statehood many doctors were self-declared with little to no practical training.[108]

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[107] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 4-5; B Caffee Family Tree, Ancestry.com, http://person.ancestry. com/tree/42540013/person/19808040723/story (accessed October 1, 2015).

[108] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 7; Thoburn, *History of Oklahoma*, 1706.

Sterling's wife Ruth was not the only person in the family to suffer from the Spanish flu epidemic that swept through the country in the last part of the decade. According to Lula, James caught it while out celebrating the Armistice in November 1918 and brought it home to the farm. The matriarch was too sick to care for the family and asked daughter Lou Rhett to leave her new husband of a few months and help care for them. When Ruth contracted the disease a few months later, Lora and Merle (both married) headed south to Elk City to help care for her, their brother, and the couple's three children. Ruth sadly died and the Morrow clan brought her home to Hammon to bury her in the Red Hill Cemetery near little Jessie. Of the two girls who had cared for her, Merle stayed healthy but Lora caught the flu strain and went home to be cared for by her mother until her strength returned. Sterling had difficulty handling the loss of Ruth and found he could not care for his children and work for a living, which prompted James and Lula to bring the three children to the family farm where they remained until Sterling remarried in 1925.[109]

The medical community was not prepared to handle many of the illnesses that struck Oklahoma during its first ten years as a state and much of that was related to the lack of consistency within the medical education system. The newly created Oklahoma State Department of Public Health worked hard to put guidelines in place that protected the public from the various diseases plaguing the state but many of its physicians were at the root of some of the problems because of their inadequate training. Several even lacked credentials but there had been no organization to track their abilities and residents failed to verify their qualifications.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Institute of Teaching understood this problem existed nationwide and set out to investigate the various education facilities across the nation and

[109] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 6-7.

provide options to overcome the dilemma facing the medical field. The organization hired Abraham Flexner to review the programs of 150 colleges, universities, and private professional institutions. He focused first on the standards set for the medical community and determined that a dangerous inconsistency existed among the various programs available to students. Flexner suggested transferring all health education to the university level with state government support of the programs. The president of the Institute, Henry S. Pritchett, believed that one of the biggest problems facing Americans and healthcare was that most citizens failed to ascertain the credentials of the physician treating them. He wrote that it was a known fact inside the profession there was an overabundance of doctors passing themselves off as trained professionals who had little to no practical clinical instruction or experience in disease and that public education was an absolute necessity.[110]

The most significant findings that came from the study showed not only an over-production of medical practitioners, but that most private medical colleges failed to prepare their students and were more interested in profits than preparing future physicians. The lesson plans were strictly instructive and lacked laboratory facilities imperative in modern therapeutic instruction. Universities and state colleges also received some of the blame because they lacked hospitals for teaching purposes and had failed to take responsibility for the standards of their institutions. All of the schools had produced an excessive number of doctors, who landed in rural areas desperate for medical professionals. Towns of 2,000 occupants or less, often had six to eight physicians where only two were needed, which resulted in reduced standards and demoralization to the physician and the patients. Cities averaged one doctor for every 400

[110] Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United State and Canada, A Report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* (Boston: The Merrymount Press, 1910), x, xii.

citizens and even that number indicated there were too many physicians. The more the merrier did not apply as quality reduced with over-abundance and Gresham's Law was as valid in medicine as finance. The report recommended a ratio of 1:1500, but made it clear the number was flexible and merely a general recommendation that had no arguable defense. State governments could solve the problem by closing down the private commercial schools that produced the untrained excess and focus all training through the university level. The private schools showed time and again they were more interested in profit than training medical professionals.[111]

A wealth of new information existed regarding disease and treatment, but it had not been disseminated to the medical community. The new approaches of scientific diagnosis through bodily samples were far superior to the previous uses of the five senses. Unfortunately, very few doctors had learned how to use all available diagnostics, resulting in the poor treatment to the sick. The new guidelines recommended by the report suggested that each candidate wishing for admission to medical school in the East and Mideast, attend at least two years of college prior to admission. Schools in the South, which included Oklahoma, should raise the minimum education requirement to at least a high school degree but John Hopkins University had the highest standard to which all schools ought to subscribe.[112]

At the time of the report there were two medical schools in Oklahoma and the state had an excess of physicians with a ratio of 1:589. The best training could be achieved through the State University of Oklahoma in Norman and it required one year of college in the sciences for admission into its program. The school received high marks in the Flexner report. Three

[111] Ibid., 14-15; Gresham's Law is an economic principle that states an overabundance of bad money drives out the good.

[112] Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States*, 20,26.

physicians ran the school and taught, charging a minimal fee. Enrollment at the time of the Carnegie report was twenty-two. In contrast, the privately run Epworth College of Medicine in Oklahoma City had forty-two in attendance, it was staffed by twenty-eight professors and fourteen "other," and charged $4,285 in fees, seven times that of the university. Most of Oklahoma's physicians came from outside the state at the time of the report, which recommended the best way to fix the problem for the future was to exclude physicians trained outside its borders.[113]

The editor of *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association*, Claude Thompson, M.D., agreed with many of the changes recommended by the Flexner report and encouraged his fellow physician's to become involved politically and urge state legislators to pass laws that tightened the approval process for new doctors. In addition, he stressed the need to embrace progressive goals that viewed children as the future, which coincided with goals of the Department of Public Instruction and Lula Morrow. Wilson had asked the legislature to pair the two departments in order to provide a medical examination for every child in the school system, and one of Lula's immediate priorities was keeping her children healthy so they would have a future. Thompson reminded his fellow physicians that they also had a duty to make sure parents stayed healthy in order to care for and enjoy their offspring who would benefit most from a life in the country, "surrounded by trees, flowers, birds singing, blue skies, sunlight, and fresh air," which supported the life the Morrows chose for their family. He thought that keeping pregnant women healthy should be a priority and encouraged a law that prevented pregnant women from working in factories or in unsanitary conditions in order to reduce infant mortality. Deaths were

[113] Ibid., 289-90; Claude Thompson, M.D., ed., *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association* IV (Jan. 1911–May 1912), 4.

as high as one of five in some districts and additional solutions involved education and individual health examinations of schoolchildren. As if he had taken a cue from the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Thompson reminded his fellow physicians that a healthy body led to a healthy mind, which would in turn reduce crime and lead children to grow up as useful citizens rather than as criminals and financial burdens on the state. The only way to change that dismal future involved first educating parents, teachers, and school boards in hygiene, sanitation, and eugenics since they were the first line of defense.[114]

The main purpose of the journal was not to lecture Oklahoma's physicians on their political duties but to disseminate information that helped them stay connected to the various treatments of infectious diseases more common to the state, which included pellagra; typhoid fever; dysentery; tuberculosis; cerebrospinal meningitis; diphtheria; influenza; measles; rabies; scarlet fever; infantile paralysis (polio); and smallpox. The first on the list, pellagra, had puzzled doctors when it first appeared in the South in the early 1900s and it had begun making an appearance in Oklahoma. Several cases had entered the hospital in Norman and the attending physician Dr. F. B. Erwin presented his findings and treatments to the medical association in an effort to start a discussion on the best course of treatment because doctors still did not understand what caused it. Patient symptoms included extreme emaciation, malnutrition, diarrhea, pain, and melancholy but the identifying characteristics that puzzled doctors were skin lesions that appeared on the hands, face, neck, and feet. Erwin treated each of the three patients with a rigid milk diet, stimulants, tonics, and intestinal antiseptics and added strychnine, quinine, iron, opium, and arsenic to one of patients, and even though they seemed to rally after treatment, died

[114] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1-6; Thompson, *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association IV*, 9-10.

within a few days. Physicians had classified pellagra as a mental disease because patients presented symptoms of severe melancholy, which shows how far the medical profession still needed to go in understanding the human body in the first two decades of the century. Physicians understood that it was a disease of the poor thought it came from corn, which was the main staple of the people who contracted the disease, but the lesions confused them. In 1915, epidemiologist Dr. Joseph Goldberger suggested malnutrition caused the disease and had successfully treated his patients with niacin, B-complex, and a high protein diet with complete recovery. Unfortunately it took the medical community time to accept the new diagnosis and untold numbers died under the ill-informed treatments provided by some of the most knowledgeable professionals in the 1910s.[115]

Rural families in western Oklahoma often fell victim to and died from many of the diseases at the top of the medical association's list but with improved hygiene and clean water and sewage systems, diseases like typhoid and infantile paralysis (polio) could be avoided. Cities had received improved water and sewage infrastructure in the first decade of the twentieth century, but changes in the rural environment followed slowly into the 1920s and even into the 1930s with government sponsored New Deal projects. The Oklahoma state chemist, Dr. Edwin DeBarr, wanted to stop the diseases at their source and encouraged practicing physicians to send him water samples in 1911. He had a difficult time getting the disorganized medical community to cooperate and went as far as suggesting they use state vehicles to deliver the samples. Infantile paralysis (polio) and typhoid were both contracted through fecal material that found its way into water supplies and because physicians did not know how to effectively treat either disease, the

[115] Ibid., 25-7, 29-31; Vladimir Hegyl, MD, "Dermatologic Manifestations of Pellagra," Medscape.com, http://emedicine.medscape.com/article/1095845-overview (last updated February 22, 2016).

public health system worked toward cleaning the water supply. Polio remained elusive, without effective treatment until invention of the vaccine in 1953, by Dr. Jonas Salk.

Louis Doss's contraction of typhoid must have been very serious for Lula to mention his illness in her memoir. He probably experienced the usual symptoms of a high fever, headache, muscle aches, belly pain, diarrhea, and nausea or vomiting. Left untreated, typhoid often resulted in death from chest congestion that turned into pneumonia or intestinal bleeding from possible abdominal perforations. Recommended treatment in 1910 consisted of large amounts of water given orally and a saline solution inserted rectally. In 1948, the medical profession began using Chloramphenicol, and switched to antibiotics in 1970, but in 1911 the rudimentary treatment that was most likely used on Louis did little to aid him in is eventual recovery. However, not providing him with medical treatment could have resulted in criminal charges filed against James or Lula as evidenced in a court appeal entitled Owens v. State. A parent had refused to provide his daughter with medical treatment for typhoid in Beaver County in 1908 and the state brought action against him resulting in a misdemeanor charge. He argued that it was his religious right to refuse the free treatment offered his daughter but lost the appeal brought before the court in 1911, which shows the seriousness that Oklahoma legislatures and administrators had taken with the protection of its children, which paralleled the belief's of the Morrows.[116]

Other common infectious diseases that affected children were trachoma, measles, scarlet fever, and diphtheria and physicians struggled with treatment and prevention of diseases that spread especially among the youngest school children. Trachoma was an eye infection that

[116] Thompson, *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association*, 33; David Reisman, M.D., "Treatment of Typhoid by Continuous Saline Instillation," in *The Journal of the American Medical Association* LIV (January 1910), 375; Owens v. State, 6 Okl.Cr.110, 116 (OK CR, 1911), http://law.justia.com/cases/oklahoma/court-of-appeals-criminal/1911/16393.html (accessed March 15, 2016).

spread uncontrollably among the Indian, orphan, and black populations in the early part of the century. It originated in dirty environments and like many of the other diseases of the time was the result of poor hygiene. Forty of the seventy children in the black orphan home in Pryor had contracted it but state officials did not seem alarmed until they found it spreading among the white population in rural areas. State officials found children at the lowest grades most vulnerable to infectious diseases, and the editor of the medical journal encouraged physicians and their wives to educate the public on the need for medical examinations for schoolchildren. As women became aware of the dangers, they rallied within their small groups and clubs and demanded the Oklahoma Medical Association find a solution and provide an intelligent course of education on hygiene that would especially prevent the further spread of the diseases that harmed their children. The Oklahoma State Medical Association and the Department of Public Health developed a plan together to provide education on cleanliness and clean up the environments by providing clean water, and safe sewage systems appropriately directed away from population.[117]

By the end of the decade, progress had been made nationally and the Surgeon General furnished a report that looked at the numerous common infectious diseases and offered statistics and recommended treatment. Doctors finally accepted the Pellagra diagnosis of malnutrition in 1915. Trachoma studies resulted in the creation of five hospitals in the country specifically dedicated to the disease and physicians treated between 9,000 and 10,000 cases, with 8,000 cured. An outbreak of typhoid in Calexico, California provided officials with a perfect laboratory for study and they concluded that unsanitary conditions on a diary farm had led to the epidemic. This diagnosis lead to studies of rural sanitation and in 1914 officials found that two

[117] Thompson, *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association*, 262, 283-5, 350; editorial read to physicians at an association meeting and to the Ladies' Auxiliary of Oklahoma State Medical Association.

major issues required attention. Sanitation education and effectiveness and education of health professionals needed improvement because less than 2 percent of rural homes contained the essential principles of sanitation in practice, and less than 3 percent of the population had an effective local health service.[118]

Europe entered WWI in 1914, which caused the US to put all its financial efforts into the possible intervention overseas, which limited any national work on medical advances. However, the flu pandemic of 1918-19 led the U.S. Surgeon General to call for heavy participation by state agencies and public demonstrations in rural districts to develop sanitary, safe homes. He asked Congress for $500,000 to provide aid to many of these areas but was only given a $50,000 pittance and did not receive the funding until July of that year, leaving rural areas to depend on state assistance to install the effective infrastructures. He had suggested water lines, new privies in private homes, improved wells, educational lectures, and vaccinations and local health officers eager to improve the problems that faced Oklahoma focused on those things in addition to sanitary excreta disposal, fly control, antimalarial measures, infant hygiene, school inspection, antituberculosis and antivenereal disease measures, along with industrial hygiene.[119]

To show the necessity of the hygiene improvements, the Surgeon General's office prepared prevalent disease figures by state from 1914-1919, that showed the major diseases reported and the number of deaths that had resulted from them, but he admitted they were probably inaccurate due to the inconsistency in physician reporting, and the fact that many

[118] Hugh S. Cumming, *Annual Report of the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service of the United States for the Fiscal Year 1920* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920), 17, 19, 2, 28-9, 51-2.

[119] Ibid., 52-3, 58.

patients never sought the help of a doctor. He suggested they might be as high as double the actual numbers provided as shown below.

Oklahoma Reported Diseases 1914-19 Resulting in Death

Disease – 1914-1919	**# Reported Average**	**# Deaths**
Cerebrospinal Meningitis	6	
Diphtheria	1,514	214
Influenza		7,350 – 1919
Measles	6,101	37
Rabies		1
Scarlet Fever	1,813	16
Smallpox	3,650	13
Typhoid Fever	1,487	321

[120]

Sixty percent of the population in Oklahoma was rural, making it difficult to provide immediate remedies and solve infrastructure problems quickly. In 1910, the population of Oklahoma was 1,657,155 people and by 1920 it had increased by almost 20 percent to 2,028,283.[121]

Many rural residents had believed they were less apt to catch any the infectious diseases because they lived far apart and were not exposed as urban residents but in 1917 the Oklahoma State Board of Health reported that many of the communicable diseases, such as typhoid, were more prevalent in the rural districts because they still lacked proper sanitation, water, and garbage facilities that local officials had installed in the towns and cities but not remote farms. Most rural areas received the benefit of education, but little assistance regarding infrastructure because local governments lacked the appropriate funding to run water and sewage lines. Public officials visited individual residences and talked with owners about their unsanitary outhouses and contaminated wells that bred the flies, which spread contagious diseases. In addition, they

[120] Ibid., 210.

[121] U.S. Census Bureau, "Resident Population and Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives," http://www.census.gov/dmd/www/resapport/states/oklahoma.pdf (accessed 30 January 2016).

talked to residents about taking advantage of vaccinations for whooping cough and measles, the typhoid inoculation, and an anti-toxin for diphtheria. Whooping cough and measles were two of the major causes of infant death and preventable. Educating the population on the advantages of the medical therapies available became one of the biggest hurdles to overcome. The Surgeon General officially resolved Pellagra's mystery in April of 1917 but in the post WWI environment the federal government expected a cost of living increase that it feared might harm the economic viability of the agrarian population and bring a return of the disease. The U.S. Department of Public Health warned rural physicians to be on the lookout for a possible reappearance.[122]

The U.S. had entered WWI in 1917 and it made a significant impact on the country and lives of thousands, but Lula Morrow had little to say about it or the effect it may have had on her family. Lou Rett (fourth born), married Leonard Taylor in March 1918 and they settled in Tulsa, where both held positions of employment. Leonard registered for the draft shortly after he and Lou married but the military never called him to service because the war ended within months of his registration. The end had a more profound effect on the family because James contracted the Spanish flu while celebrating the Armistice in November 1918, and Ruth died from it in 1919. Oklahoma communities had signaled the end of WWI with the sounding of fire sirens at 4:30am and people celebrated in the streets with impromptu parades and parties that lasted into the afternoon. The pandemic that swept the world in 1918-19, came to Oklahoma sometime in late summer 1918, with the first reported cases in September. None of the Morrow family members living at home were immune. They all caught the disease in its alleged last stages of impact in the U.S. when federal officials reported improvement in the situation, but it was impossible to

[122] Claude Thompson, M.D., *The Journal of the Oklahoma Medical Association* X (June 1917-May 1918), 36, 137-143, 178.

track because most Oklahoman's lived in rural areas and never sought treatment from physicians. Five counties alone reported 2,456 cases in 1918 and those numbers grew exponentially in Oklahoma through March 1919, which shows a late arrival in the new state. Between October 1918 and April 1919, an estimated 7,350 Oklahomans died from the flu but the numbers were probably much higher because of the physician shortage that had resulted from the war. It took months for many doctors to return home after Armistice.[123]

Officials originally suggested the flu pandemic had killed between 20 and 40 million worldwide and 675,000 nationally. They believed it originated in Spain, but there are several new theories that dispute that finding. It received the name Spanish flu because the Spanish press recognized the seriousness and reported on the tragedy first. More recently it has been suggested that it may have originated in the U.S. from flocks of migratory birds and that American soldiers carried the flu virus to Europe. In 2014, historian Mark Humphries argued that a respiratory infection, which struck China in 1917, was the direct result of the pandemic. He uncovered documentation that the British shipped 94,000 Chinese laborers forming the Chinese Labor Corps through Canada who carried the illness to Europe in 1918. Officials have also identified Kansas as a possible location of the first breakout, which spread through an Army camp and killed forty-eight doughboys in March 1918.[124]

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[123] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 5-6; The Great Pandemic, The United States in 1918-1919, "Your State, Oklahoma," http://www.flu.gov/pandemic/history/1918/your_state/southwest/oklahoma/index.html (accessed 1 February 2016); Cary Aspinwall, "Influenza: 1918 Pandemic, Thousands in Oklahoma Died during Worldwide Outbreak of Influenza, *The Tulsa World*, 21 September 2013; Roger Bromert, John K. Hayden, Terry Magill, and Joyce Stoffers, eds., *Weatherford: 1898-1998* (Weatherford: Centennial History Book Committee, 1998), 37.

[124] Molly Billings, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/ (accessed 3 February 2016); Aspinwall, "Influenza," 21 September 2013; Dan Vergano, "1918 Flu Pandemic That Killed 50 Million Originated in China, Historians Say," January 24, 2014,

Whatever the origin, one of the leading concerns of the State Department of Health was that potential diseases spread through the unhealthy water supplies and other unsanitary conditions in rural areas. The legislature had given the department power to supervise all water supply and sewage plans in 1917 but little had been accomplished when the pandemic struck. A major problem facing many Oklahomans was not poverty but ignorance and the commissioner worried about the rural poor and how to educate them on proper hygiene, believing that their condition was grave without appropriate knowledge. He also worried about the enormous task facing his department as they attempted to reach this portion of the public. Babies needed special care because they were most vulnerable and mortality numbers showed that anywhere from 12 to 20 out of 1,000 died in their first year of life. The commissioner blamed the chief cause of these deaths on ignorance in care and feeding with 25 percent coming from intestinal issues as a result of spoiled food. He viewed the flu as especially dangerous because the immune systems of little children could not combat the disease. There are numerous stories, in the recollections gathered through western Oklahoma historical societies, of healthy children sent away to live with relatives or friends until their families were healthy again and some counties banned public gatherings until the threat had passed. To combat the problem, the department had produced numerous bulletins and distributed them statewide but it is impossible to determine if lives were saved as a result of the work accomplished before the Spanish flu struck Oklahoma.[125]

National Geographic News, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/01/140123-spanish-flu-1918-china-origins-pandemic-science-health/ (accessed February 1, 2016).

[125] John Duke, M.D., *Annual Report of the State Department of Public Health, State of Oklahoma* (Guthrie: State Department of Public Health, 1918), 7, 11, 13; Ed Burchfiel & Maxine Burchfield, eds., *Wagon Tracks, Volume I* (Cordell: Washita County History Committee, Inc., 1976), 318; Dickson, "Peter Harmon," *Prairie Wedding*, 179; Lynn Kennemer, ed., *Elk City, Rising from the Prairie* (Elk City: Western Oklahoma Historical Society, 2007), 72,

Even though many died in the pandemic, the Department of Public Health experienced great success in the eradication of numerous diseases that once killed thousands. The statewide effort of educating the public and cleaning up water and sewage sources showed steady improvements in public health. In addition, diphtheria, smallpox, and typhoid fever had almost disappeared as a result of vaccinations and anti-toxins developed by the medical community. Dr. John Duke, the commissioner of the State Department of Public Health, blamed the spread of scarlet fever on overheated and poorly ventilated rooms and the spread of measles on parents who sometimes purposely exposed their children in an effort to establish immunity. Unfortunately, there were still diseases that were little understood like infantile paralysis but the commissioner had hope that continued work through his department would see continued increases in life expectancy numbers. Duke's education program depended heavily on the newspapers carrying his weekly bulletins, which made various recommendations that included any number of things from the building of proper school buildings to improving water and sewage infrastructures.[126]

By 1920, much had changed within the Department of Public Health for Oklahoma. In April 1919, a new commissioner was appointed. The war and the flu pandemic provided new needs in the department and the state legislature provided funding for a Director for Public Health Education, funds for the control of epidemics, and $250,000 for three Tuberculosis treatment facilities. In addition, it created two new departments, the Bureau of Venereal Diseases, and the Bureau of Tuberculosis to work in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Public Health. In the summer of 1919, the state Department of Public Health waged war on typhoid fever (the number two cause of death in Oklahoma) and provided the vaccine free of

[126] Duke, *Annual Report of State Department*, 15, 18-19, 63-4.

charge. Fear of a repeat of the pandemic flu season of 1918-19 prompted the department to create a volunteer force of 100 physicians who agreed to go wherever needed in the case of a new outbreak in the 1919-20 winter season, but were fortunately not needed thanks in part to the issuance of 2,000 free Rosenow flu vaccines.[127]

The state made leaps and bounds in the physical improvement of the lives of its residents and also displayed evidence in the economic improvement of women who found employment in positions of importance. The new head of public health, Dr. A. R. Lewis, recognized the abilities and values of women and appointed the first female sanitary inspector to his department. He may have been criticized for the move because he went out of his way to explain in his report to the governor that she had proven herself to be well liked and was very efficient. Numerous towns had forwarded letters to the commissioner that heralded praises for the woman who made a difference where it had seemed impossible previously. Lewis also appointed a woman in the highly visible position of Director of Public Education of Public Health. Fannie Inez Bell utilized over 400 newspaper publications to get her weekly educational messages out to the public based on specific health campaigns and her messages were well received, by men and women. She reached every venue by furnishing educational materials to health workers, writing articles for professional journals, and sending copies of all her bulletins to twenty-four Red Cross nurses expected to teach lessons on home hygiene and care of the sick to all the High Schools in the state.[128]

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[127] A. R. Lewis, M.D., *Fourth Annual Report of the State Department of Public Health of Oklahoma, For the Year Ending June 30, 1920* (Oklahoma City: Government Printing Office, 1920), 7, 18, 24.

[128] Ibid., 113-14.

Dr. Lewis's respect and support for women in the workplace also existed in a speech he delivered to the Federation of Women's Clubs in 1920. He told them he viewed women as the intellectual future of progress of the community, the state, and the nation. He, like many others, observed women proving their capabilities during the war and predicted they would become an integral part of the progress of the human race because they had specific characteristics that benefited service industries like public health. In his experience, women approached things in a holistic manner and were more in tune with public needs, suggesting that his audience could be of tremendous help to public health by organizing cleanup campaigns, becoming politically involved, and making certain that their towns supported the laws created. Lewis reminded them of the services his department offered which included the assistance of a sanitary engineer to investigate all water plants and sewers; ten health inspectors who investigated hotels, rooming houses, cafes, and grocery stores; offered a state laboratory available to test possible chemical and bacterial infections; could quarantine infections and contagious diseases; and it furnished vaccines against typhoid and smallpox, with anti-toxins for diphtheria and hydrophobia. He invited them to pass the information to their local communities and contact his department with concerns related to those services.[129]

Lewis's open sponsorship of women in the healthcare field was as promising as the continuing improvement in the public health of rural Oklahoma and the influences of its female residents in public policy. The Morrows were very fortunate with the health recoveries of Louis Doss in 1911 from typhoid and the family's bout with Spanish flu in 1918, even though they did not escape the losses of Jessie in 1914 and Ruth in 1919. After education and healthcare, the most important thing to Lula was her religious belief. She was a faithful Christian whose faith

[129] Ibid., 26, 28-30, 113-14.

guided her life and the lives of her husband and children. Prayer was at the very heart of her faith, keeping her connected to God and protecting her loved ones. She would have accepted the deaths of Jessie and Ruth as a part of the rhythm and circle of life, asking God to help her accept the losses and care for those still alive to do the same. She chronicled the baptismal dates of all her offspring, which displayed the significance that those events had in her life. It meant that her children had accepted salvation and she would not have to worry about their souls. Finding a preacher to create a church and bring together a community of believers was one of the first things the matriarch did when she arrived in Oklahoma.[130]

The Morrows belonged to the Church of Christ, a bible based Protestant religion that followed a strict elder interpretation of the new testament in the *Holy Bible*. Individual congregations were run independently by the male members who were elected to fill elder and deacon positions based on a letter from Paul to Timothy that laid out the leadership roles and the expected behavior of women inside the church. Paul forbade them from teaching or exercising any authority over a man, and he commanded them to remain quiet and submissive in deference to the male leadership, which was considered a sign of maturity and godliness. Outside of the church, Paul encouraged married couples to respect and love each other. He implored husbands to love their wives with the same love that Christ had for the church, and reminded them they became one in marriage. Harm to their partner meant harm to themselves within the marital relationship and Lula and James treated each other with equal respect in the farm and in the community.[131]

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[130] Morrow, Grandma's Diary," 2.

[131] *Holy Bible*, 1Tim. 2:11-15; *Holy Bible*, 1Tim. 3 1-13: *Holy Bible*, Eph. 5:22-33; Church of Christ information also provided by my husband's descendants who grew up in the church. The congregations are still structured the same with male elders and deacons running

A unique hallmark of the Church of Christ was the lack of musical instruments or choir singing used during worship. The New Testament of the *Holy Bible* was silent about the use of a choir or any musical instruments during worship, which prompted founding leaders to leave them out of the service. Song leaders invited all attendees to sing hymns in four-part harmony, acapella style. Baptisms were completely voluntary and did not take place until children were old enough to understand their commitment to a Christian life of service and able to confess their belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Church elders hired a preacher and elders oversaw general operations with deacons meeting the needs of individual members.[132]

Several different Christian churches dotted the western landscape of Oklahoma and multiple stories of early settlement included some kind of church involvement or affiliation. In Weatherford, the first formal church gathering was a service held for multiple denominations in 1900. Baptists, Roman Catholics, Congregational, Methodist, Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal, Methodist Episcopal South, and non-denominational Christians met together in a wooden building on Eighth St. In 1904, the First Christian Church dedicated its $5,000 brick building with fine art glass windows and antique oak pews on January 17. Elk City's first organized church was the Methodist Episcopal North Church in 1901, which began building in 1910 with a motto of "Let's get out of the dugout." Many of the congregations met in the tent tabernacle located at Main and Broadway and had their Sunday singing sessions at the Keen Hotel. The Presbyterian Church secured early funding for its church in 1901 but it was not finished until 1910, about the same time that several other congregations raised their buildings. The First Baptist Church, First Christian, Church of Christ, Church of God, and Church of the Nazarene all

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each organization individually. There is no national organization and each church stands on its own, often varying in minor doctrinal issues based on biblical interpretation.

[132] Ibid.; Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1-6.

got their starts in Elk City during the first two decades, some as small as twenty-five members and as large as 300 or more. The numbers of churches on the landscape are a good indication that Christianity remained central to many resident's lives. In Bessie, located in Washita County (H County at the time), twelve families belonging to the Peach Lutheran Church moved to the territory for religious freedom and the homestead opportunities, meeting together in a dugout until they outgrew it and built a building still known today as the Peace on the Prairie. The Charles Barham family remembered their ancestors with pride as involved members of the First Baptist Church in Elk City, teaching Sunday School and serving on various committees.[133]

A. J. Farris was the preacher that the Morrow's brought north in 1901. He and his family filed on the claim next to Lula and James and lived with them in their dugout until they built their own. It is not clear what happened to the Farris's because they do not appear in the 1910 census of Kiowa district and Lula never mentioned them again. An A. J. Farris does appear in a lawsuit filed in 1916 in Shawnee over a cotton grade dispute, but it is not clear if this is the same individual. In 1909, Vivian Morrow chose baptism and Lula mentioned the presiding preacher was O. E. Enfield, which indicates Farris had most likely left the district by that time. Enfield also presided over Ophie's baptism in 1910 but after that was known in western Oklahoma as a traveling preacher and a prominent member of the Socialist Party. Lula does not mention anything else specific to Enfield but his personal beliefs against the war landed him in jail in 1917.[134]

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[133] Bromert, *Weatherford*, 27; Kennemer, *Elk City*, 36, 67; Dickson, *Prairie Wedding*, 30, 222, 302-3

[134] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 2-3; Howard Parker, *Oklahoma Reports LIII, Cases Determined in the Supreme Court of Oklahoma, January 1916 – June 1916* (Oklahoma City: Harlow Publisher, 1916), 593-595; Jim Bisset. *Agrarian Socialism in America, Marx, Jefferson, and Jesus in the Oklahoma Countryside, 1904-1920* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 164.

During WWI, the American government pursued a nationalistic policy that forbade any negative opinions about its involvement in the war and in western Oklahoma, preachers, newspapers, and Christian schools faced serious censorship and closure during 1917-20. Several preachers across the state took a pacifist stance against U.S. involvement in Europe (including several from the Church of Christ) and openly identified their places of worship as "peace churches." Leaning on nationalism and majority support, Congress moved to suppress any dissension by passing the Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918, summarily authorizing federal officials to stop people from writing material and speeches that promoted opposition. The *Gospel Advocate*, a Church of Christ newspaper, risked losing its postal privileges and shifted its editorials to a pro-war stance after government pressure. In addition to the famous arrest and imprisonment of Eugene V. Debs, federal authorities also arrested numerous preachers who opposed war and O. E. Enfield, the minister who inspired two of the Morrow children to openly accept Christianity, took his place among those speaking against the American involvement in the European war. Federal law enforcement officials arrested him for allegedly attempting to organize a revolt in Ellis County and a federal judge sentenced him to twenty years in the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth. In Cordell, federal authorities forced Cordell Christian College (a Church of Christ school) to close its doors because it did not preach an appropriate doctrine. Despite all the progress made in so many areas, the country had taken a huge step backward when it denied its citizens their fundamental right to freedom of speech. Perhaps this was a time better forgotten by Lula or if prompted maybe she would have remembered the government suppression and pressure on Christians to keep their opinions of opposition to themselves.[135]

[135] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 3,5; Bisset, *Agrarian Socialism in America,* 162, 164.

It is also possible that unless directly affected by the loss of a loved one sent overseas, rural women were too busy to pay much attention to the war. Caroline Boa Henderson, best known for her letters written during the Dust Bowl, lived in the Oklahoma Panhandle on a homestead with her husband, and wrote a popular column for farmwomen called "The Homestead Ladies Scribbling Pad." Despite the raging war overseas, her column talked very little about the war. In one month's newsletter in 1916, she wrote about the ways in which women were showing support for the war and heeding the government call for national preparedness. She described the Citizens Preparedness Parade in New York City attended by 20,000 women and the various ways that women could prepare themselves in the event of an invasion. In addition to Red Cross work, women could join or organize groups that received military drill and exercise instruction, they could join the Y.W.C.A and make bandages for soldiers in Mexico, but her column, directed at homesteading females, largely ignored the war and continued to recommend favorite books, gardening tips, child-rearing ideas, recipes and canning ideas. Even after the U.S. entered the war her subsequent columns focused on the daily lives of farmwomen. She occasionally provided a paragraph about how to effectively use rations and substitutions as a result of the shortages caused by the war, but her language sounded as detached from the event as Lula's memoir. Henderson repeated government rhetoric of national privilege and responsibility but mostly her column continued as usual.[136]

Other than reading newspapers and periodicals about the war, the only other connection would be through volunteerism, or loved ones who had joined the effort of their own free will or

[136] Caroline Boa Henderson, "The Homestead Ladies Scribbling Pad," *Ladies World* 37 (July 1916), 18; Henderson, "The Homestead," (August 1916), 10; Henderson, "The Homestead," *Ladies World* 38 (July 1917), 14; Henderson, "The Homestead," (August 1917), 13; Henderson, "The Homestead," (October 1917), 15.

had been drafted. Radio was available in 1917, but the government had halted all private radio broadcasts after April 7, 1917. The shortages of food and other goods would not have affected western Oklahoma farmwomen as much as their urban sister because they already knew what sacrifice and shortages felt like through their difficult early years and periods of lean crop yields. Their lessons in self-sustainability would have allowed them to prepare for dismal futures and their isolation on the farm may have kept them emotionally distant from the war. Each of these things combined explains why Lula had nothing to remember in 1917. In reality she was fortunate that Leonard's registration of the draft was the closest connection she had to a war that killed so many young men.[137]

Residents across the state celebrated the Armistice with the blast of the fire sirens at 4:30 in the morning and impromptu parties and events that took place in the towns but Lula's only mentioned connection with that event was the deadly Spanish flu that James brought home after he attended the celebration. The entire family became so ill that they had to solicit the help of the newly married daughter who temporarily left her husband and came home to the farm to care for the family. The youngest child was just a toddler and at a very high risk of dying from the disease. The Morrow's were lucky to have only lost one family member and since they all got sick at the same time, none were sent away like they were in so many families in an effort to protect them from becoming sick. The Spanish flu killed millions of people and it might have been worse if officials in Oklahoma had not started creating safe infrastructures for its residents through the State Department of Public Health's program of creating clean water and safe sewage disposal. The department also started an education program that had made considerable

[137] Thomas H. White, "Section 13, Radio During WWI 1914-1919, United States Early Radio History," http://earlyradiohistory.us/index.html (accessed March 4, 2016).

impact on residents and doctors across the state learned how to eradicate some diseases and treat others more effectively. All of these concerns were felt by Oklahoma residents but women, especially, wanted improvements in healthcare because they were the main caretakers of their sick family members. Just like education, rural western Oklahoma women looked to their government to help them provide the protections necessary for a healthy lifestyle and the new state responded accordingly. Farming families worked in units even after children married and moved out of the home, which is evident with the care the family received from the two older daughters in 1918 and the care of Sterling's children after Ruth's death. Husbands and wives worked in partnerships to create a healthy, successful environment at the farm and children contributed even after they married and left home. The health improvements made by the end of the second decade would allow James and Lula to focus on new things like freedom of travel, with the purchase of an automobile and improved roadways, and educating the last of their children. The first two decades were behind them as they looked to their future.

Conclusion

Building Dreams Through Teamwork, 1900-1920

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much"
Helen Keller

Even though education, health, and faith took center stage in Lula's memoir during the second decade, several of the older children married and the family made a few changes at home. Sterling married Ruth in 1912 and they relocated to the farm to help James during the time that Lula and the children lived in Hammon. The grief of losing little Jessie in 1914 may have overshadowed the beginning of WWI, as there was no mention of it, but Ophie's marriage at the end of August 1915 was a cause for celebration. Sterling and Ruth vacated the farm in 1915 when Lula and the ten children came home, prompting James to move another house on the property next to the original home, which increased the size to five rooms and two porches. Lula sounded quite proud over the improvement but it burned down within a couple of months while the family attended Sunday church. They suspected that the chicken incubator in the kitchen caused the fire but they fortunately had purchased a fire insurance policy, which paid them $600.00. With the help of neighbors they built the frame of a four-room house within two weeks to the day of the fire. The girls living at home tacked on the lath during the summer and James hired help to finish the plastering of the walls in the fall.[138]

The remainder of the Morrow story is reserved for another time only to reveal that James and Lula lived happy, full lives surrounded by their children, grandchildren and other extended family members. They purchased their first automobile sometime around 1920 and even though it took time to adjust to the contraption with poor road conditions and a lack of driving skills, it

[138] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 5.

provided them with great joy. James had few mishaps and when the children were around they drove in his stead but he eventually learned how to operate the auto because in the couple's retirement years it gave them the mobility to explore the countryside and visit family. They went west to New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Idaho, and Colorado, and south to Texas. They survived the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl, and WWII with few scars and continued to carry their Christian ethic throughout their lives. According to her memoir, Lula's faith never left her. There are multiple pages in the front and back of "Grandma's Diary" written by several of her grandchildren. In 2007, one of them wrote that the homestead was still in the possession of a direct descendant and added that just before Lula died she wrote the following:

> The old homestead stood through many years vacant and all the improvements perished. The grove of trees and orchard died; windmill and well done away with; also granaries, barn and chicken house moved away. But what God made is still there. The beautiful canyons with walls of flowers and a stream of water from a spring where the children got so much pleasurable play. Such was life Oklahoma![139]

The buildings of the Morrow homestead may have all disappeared but there is no question that the matriarch left her imprint on Oklahoma, as did so many other women who lived on the prairie in the western part of the state. She was full of hope when she and James left Texas with their four children in September 1900 and that hope never seemed to fade despite the challenges they faced. The family lived in a dugout for the first three years, broke the land, and undertook the creation of a church and a community of neighbors and friends. Men may have held outward control of the economy, but on closer examination it is clear that western Oklahoma women played an integral part in the economic development. Men primarily concentrated on farming and earning money outside of the home while women produced extra

[139] Morrow, "Grandma's Diary," 1-6, 131.

garden produce, eggs, milk, and butter for sale at market in the first few years. Often left alone to guard and care for the homestead, women gained independence and self-confidence in their ability to maintain and protect their property. Homesteading farmwomen adapted their skills far beyond the separations set by the social standards of domesticity. Rejected from the economic sector, they circumnavigated social restrictions and manipulated domesticity in order to achieve a personal sense of autonomy and power. For couples like Lula and James who had a healthy respect of each other and decided everything within their partnership, they also extracted satisfaction and happiness from their roles. Dee Brown gave his women the credit of taming society but in reality western Oklahoma homesteading wives were not alone and received considerable help from their husbands who provided the physical, political, and economic muscle when needed. Women had to depend on their men for certain things but in the twentieth century they expanded those limitations and displayed their worth and value to the male dominated government and society. Women slowly gained more power and influence inside and outside the farm.

The purchase of a second home in Hammon in 1911 best displayed Lula's autonomy and her negotiated partnership with James. She may have lost her attempts to persuade her neighbors to consolidate their school district, but it did not stop her from finding a solution. The next best thing was to take the children to Hammon to provide them with a better education, which not only demonstrated Lula's self-confidence, independence, and problem solving skills, but it also revealed James's selflessness. As partners, the couple wanted the best for their children and they both willingly agreed to sacrifice the daily love and care of each other along with additional work duties in their respective residences. James would have to take on Lula's chores at the farm and in turn Lula would have to handle everything associated with the home in town.

Homesteading and raising a family was a tremendous amount of work that was best accomplished through a partnership and even though husbands and wives generally accepted the work best suited to their physical and emotional strengths, their tasks also required the assistance of the each other at varying times, which caused blurring and overlap within the socially perceived, gendered lines. The one thing that separated women from men on the farm was their uterus. Giving birth was not something they could negotiate, but once children were born and weaned off mother's milk, raising them was a parental team project. In fact, Lula never mentioned her twelve births as if it was just another daily occurrence. If married couples were to survive marriage and the homestead in the twentieth century, teamwork of overlapping duties and a mutual respect for each others abilities was an absolute necessity.

In the second decade, the Morrows had settled into a rhythm on the farm as did most other families who had survived the first years of homesteading and Lula's main interest's focused on the health of her family and the education of her children. The government also looked toward improvement in the two areas and Lula, along with her fellow rural sisters looked to their government to take the lead. Oklahoma's western homesteading women were strong, resilient, and passionate and they had every opportunity to break free of their domestic role within their partnerships, but chose to retain the role and develop a more equal partnership with their spouses. The combination of the work created on the farm and the acceptance of leadership over home life led western Oklahoma's Anglo homesteading wives to develop independence, autonomy, and egalitarian marital relationships, which resulted in a profound influence on their children's futures and that of the new state of Oklahoma.

Twentieth century, first generation, western Oklahoma pioneers were parents and farmers. They accomplished whatever they set their minds to, sometimes out of necessity and at

other times out of personal choice. Some women did not like the hard labor of the farm and stuck to the duties of the home, while others relished in the self-satisfaction they felt from the accomplishments of outdoor work. If women had adhered to the ideology of quiet and submissive, the prairie would have buried them. If men held firm to the belief that they were nothing more than single-minded masculine brutes, the women would have buried them. Applying the separate sphere ideology to an entire population provides a nice general explanation but it is too singular and entirely inaccurate. Human beings are multidimensional in thought, actions, and behaviors and they have the ability to evolve in conjunction with their environments. Homesteading success required self-motivation, a strong work ethic, cooperation, and a little luck. Pioneer farming wives who settled in western Oklahoma in the early 1900s, cracked the glass ceiling in society's unrealistic expectations of the Victorian woman and emerged into strong, capable partnerships that allowed them a sense of independence, self-confidence, and free will. Would Lula tell you she loved being a wife and a mother? I think she would, but she would also tell you she loved the farm and it was a success because of a joint effort and the couple's ability to adapt to the needs of the homestead. First generation pioneering women, like Lula Morrow, not only left a strong imprint on Oklahoma's past, but created a future foundation that formed many of the social, economic, and political beliefs of today. They passed their passion and resilience to their children, who passed it on to their children, and it is still evidenced today in the basic principles of many Oklahomans. They clearly influenced the future of Oklahoma's economy, its politics, and its social beliefs, which still stand proudly today in the hearts and minds of the states residents.

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