

Bertha Busler Video Notes – by Henry Sullivan, 7/23/2010

1891 – She was born in Livingston County, Missouri. Her parents were James and Nellie Gann. Her grandparents were, on her mother's side: Sarah and Henry Hand, and on her father's side: Winniferd and Samuel Gann.

She was never around her father's parents. They lived in St. Joseph, Missouri. He was Samuel Gann. Born in Indiana. Her mother's parents were Henry Harrison Hand, a Civil War veteran reported MIA. (Conley has lots of info.). He was in the medical corps. He died March 2, 1902 in St. Joseph, MO. She was Sarah Elmira Hand and she died July 4, 1925. She remarried Miller. She's the oldest in the 4 generation picture. After her divorce she lived with Grandma Gann.

1895 – Conred's mother Julia left his father Willis Sullivan because of his drinking. Bertha never saw her husband's father.

Conred (“Con”), [Wm.] Henry and Orval Sullivan had Indian allotment land in Oklahoma. Conred rented his land out when they moved to Kansas. His land was about halfway between Claremore and Pryor, OK.

1900s – Attended Indian school and paid tuition of \$1 a month. There were 65 in her class. Forest Idley (she) was the teacher at Tate School at the foot of a hill. They lived about half-way between Pryor and Claremore, Oklahoma.

1902 – She came to Pryor Creek (later Pryor), Oklahoma (Indian Territory) on a train with her parents and her mother's sister. They rented a big house for everybody.

1904 – Met Conred at school.

1907-8 – She and Con courted for a couple of years by going to church and buggy rides but says there was no “hanky-panky” (in answer to impish question from Vashti). Once at church the collection was \$2.60. The preacher “demeaned people and preached that all little babies would go to hell.” She “just didn't have no use for that.”

February 28, 1909 – Married Conred Sullivan

March 2, 1909 – Moved to Kansas in covered wagon. Took 30 days from [Mayes County] Oklahoma. Lived with Con's mother for 6 months and then homesteaded in SW Kansas. There were 4 wagons: 1-Con and Bertha, 1-Con's mother, Julia (Sullivan) (Ward) who used to live in Lenapah, Oklahoma, 1-William H. Cumpston (Julia's father), 1-G.F. Ward. Julia did most of the cooking.

On the way to Kansas, she saw her first movie in Arkansas City. It was funny. No sound. Motorcycles on fences.

March 30, 1909 – Arrived at Aunt Jennie's (Bertha's sister), who had a homestead in Kansas.

1909 – Lived with his parents until got a contested homestead. You could contest a homestead if someone wasn't living on it. Contested one but lost it. Was OK because it was right next to his mother. Contested another one and got it. Was about 4 miles east of present-day Rolla, KS. Lived in a 12 x 14 ft. dugout. They had a “Monkey Heater,” a type of pot-bellied stove.

May 1, 1910 – Her first child, Mae was born. Earnest was born July 2, 1912, Earl on July 19, 1914, Carl on April 22, 1917, and Vashti on April 13, 1920. Of her children, Earl was the most like Conred. They didn't look alike, just similar in height [both short].

They lived on Conred's Indian allotment land in Oklahoma for 3 years and son Earl was born there. Moved back to Kansas on a train. Rented a boxcar for their household goods. He later traded it for a ¼ section near Rolla, KS.

Grandma Ward (Julia Cumpston, Conred's mother)'s father called Bertha “Birdie,” because it sounded like “Bertha.”

1920 – 4 Generation picture taken with baby Jean (Vashti) who was 3 months old, in Morton County, near Rolla, KS. Vashti, Bertha, Nellie (Hand) Gann, and her grandmother (Hand) Miller.

1920s – Coyotes came up to the house with antelopes seen in the distance. Sage hens would damage the crops but were good to eat. Conred played violin and organ and gave lessons.

August, 1923 – Conred died of pneumonia

1923-24 – After Conred died, she and 5 kids sold cream via the mail carrier. Had some cattle.

April 17, 1924 – Married Ira Busler who was in Kansas to work for the Ganns in the broom corn. Violet was born June 17, 1926 and died in February, 1934. George Busler was born November 29, 1928, Jennie on June 22, 1931 and Wayne on July 26, 1935.

1931 – Lived in Colby, Kansas for 2 years. Was there when Earnest went to Limon, Colorado for 2 weeks to deliver horses with another kid. Weren't paid for the horses so had no money for the return. Came back during blizzard. Saved by Ira's overcoat. Walked home.

1931 – Moved back to Oklahoma. Picked cotton for \$.20 per hundred pounds.

1930s – Ira Busler made \$7.20 per month working for WPA. He had charge of 88 men and helped build the concrete road east of Watonga, OK. They used shovels and 50 gallon drums for culverts.

1930s – Her mother's sister's husband was a bootlegger and bought and sold booze. Grandma Gann said, “I know right where he kept it!”

1940 – Moved to Oregon in truck with a little house on the back. Did hay harvesting in Colorado. Spent a month in Springvale, Utah working in the fruit. “Landed in this Oregon with a 5\$ bill.” Spent that \$5 putting the kids in school. Chopped onions – cut tops off after digging

them up. Reason for moving: They “were just about to starve in Oklahoma.” Her brother Owen was already in Nyssa, Oregon.

1941 – Her first electric washing machine, ABC brand, cost \$6.95 – Before she used a scrub board.

If she could change anything, she said that she “would have a little more grit.” She said she wouldn't put up with Ira's brothers Loice and Lisle. She told a story about Lisle buying 8 horses for \$103 that weren't worth that much. Loice once cut up a car's body trying to make it into a truck.