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Celesta Lois Kidder Adams Oral History Summary

Celesta Lois Kidder Adams, born on January 27, 1907, in Martin, Kansas, shares her life story and experiences in the Wet Mountain Valley during an interview conducted on April 8, 1987. She details her family history, highlighting her father's settlement in Kansas in 1876 and her grandmother's career as a schoolteacher. Celesta and her husband, Lee, moved to the Valley in 1931 during the Great Depression, driven by the severe drought affecting their farm in Crowley. The couple leased land and survived their early years with the support of the Lange family.

Celesta describes life in the Valley during the Depression, including widespread bartering, working long hours for minimal wages, and the WPA's role in building infrastructure. She recalls Westcliffe's thriving economy with multiple stores and the impact of the bank's closure in 1937 due to government regulations. The railroad, a vital transportation and economic lifeline, was discontinued in 1937 due to the high costs of upgrading infrastructure.

The interview captures aspects of daily life, including farming practices, community recreation such as dances and turkey shoots, and the advent of electricity in 1944. Lee was instrumental in bringing electricity to the Valley, and their dairy farm was the first to be powered. Celesta also recounts the area's education system and the challenges of World War II.

Throughout, she emphasizes the resilience and resourcefulness of Valley residents. Despite advancing age, Celesta expressed her unwavering dedication to her community, stating she never planned to retire.

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