

**NANNITA
REGINA H.
DAISEY
1855-1903**



**LED WOMEN
ON INDIAN
TERRITORY
LAND RUNS**

With her pistol and stakes in hand, a petite Kentucky woman leaped from a train north of Edmond during the Land Run of 1889, staked her land claim, and immediately re-boarded the train before it passed her by. According to legend, there are multiple versions of what really happened.

Nannita Regina H. Daisey was born in Pennsylvania in 1855. She was educated in St. Louis and moved to Kentucky to work as a teacher and later a reporter. When she ran for Kentucky State Librarian, Nannita gained a reputation for witty and frank speech. No one was surprised when she announced plans to take part in the opening of the Unassigned Lands in Indian Territory in April 1889.

Any citizen or immigrant could claim 160 acres of land, provided they lived on the land and made improvements for five years. At noon, an estimated 50,000 people rode horses, drove wagons, or traveled by railroad cars to stake their claims. The first car of the first Santa Fe train headed north into Unassigned Lands was reserved for members of the press. Daisey, dispatched by the Dallas Morning News and Fort Worth Gazette, already had chosen a place to stake her land claim.

The first version of what happened came from the only published eyewitness account, a fellow Dallas Morning News reporter on the train. He claimed that, when the train slowed at an upgrade, Daisey jumped off the platform near the front, planted a stake over which she threw her cloak, fired a couple of shots into the air, and hustled back catch the rear end of the train, where he helped her back aboard.

The next version was told by Daisey several years. She signaled the engineer to slow down and jumped while the train was in motion. She planted her stakes, threw her cloak over one, fell on her knees and discharged her revolver in the air exclaiming, "Thus I salute the Kentucky Daisey's claim!"

In the 1891, 1892, and 1893 land runs, Nannita also helped other women stake their claims. After settling in Guthrie, she married Scandinavian immigrant and Army soldier Andreas E. J. Ueland Svegeborg. When he left Oklahoma, they separated. They later tried to unsuccessfully reconcile in Chicago. She died there in 1903 in poverty.

Her obituary in The Daily Oklahoman provided another version. "She leaped from the cowcatcher at the front of the train to stake her claim. When she saw the train speed increasing, she removed her petticoat and tied it to a nearby bush to demonstrate she'd made improvement on her claim." In previous accounts, there had never been a mention of either a cowcatcher or a petticoat – and the writer never met Daisey.

In July 2007 the Edmond Parks Foundation erected a monument to 'Kentucky Daisey' in the Market Place Plaza, believing the 'cowcatcher and petticoat' version as authentic. Which story is truthful is unknown since she left no diaries, letters or oral history.