

NICKLES, W. H.

INTERVIEW

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Interview with W. H. Nickles  
Kingfisher, Oklahoma

Investigator - Louise S. Barnes  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
October 28, 1937

Mr. W. H. Nickles was born in Maine, March 3, 1856. He and Alace Nickles were married in Maine, on November 22, 1876. They lived in Maine for several years in a sod house, then they moved to Kansas, then to Oklahoma.

Mr. Nickles told about their trip to Oklahoma, in 1889, in the following way: We started from Elsie Ranch, located in Kansas, to come to Oklahoma. We were in a covered wagon, pulled by an ox team, with a two wheeled trailer fixed on the back of the wagon for our sleeping quarters and for our groceries. The ox team weighed 3200 pounds and besides these we had a team of horses, a pony, a plow, chickens and a cow.

We used the pony to drive across the streams so we would know what course to take when we forded these large creeks, also the Cimarron River. One day on our trip to the line where the race was to begin, we

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ate lunch at Medicine Lodge, Kansas, and it rained so hard that we did not know whether we could or would be able to get our wagons across the streams or not that afternoon, if the rain did not let up, so we drove to Kiowa and drove our wagon into a stable and I don't believe it has ever rained or ever will again as hard as it did that night.

The next morning we drove several miles but had to let the stock rest before we forded the creek, then the cowboys offered their assistance but after our stock had rested they got through without their assistance.

When we arrived in Oklahoma we came in south of where Kingfisher now stands, south of the present Kingfisher graveyard. It was twelve o'clock and there were soldiers lined up all along trying to keep the people from getting into the land.

I saddled my big black horse and started on my run when the signal was given and leaving my family behind for a few hours, I rode across the country, homesteading about three miles south and a quarter of a mile east of Kingfisher, on John's Creek. I then

went to prove the quarter up and brought the family to help me share our new home.

We broke up thirty acres of land and planted a few different kinds of seed which we had brought with us from Kansas. After my son and I got the land broken we took the ox and the horse teams and hauled lumber from Guthrie, to build Kingfisher. Many a time we have had chills on the way and had to stop and roll up into a blanket until we could get over them.

We had built a sod house on the farm but we lived in the wagons until our plowing was finished. That was when we had our best entertainments at the old sod school-house.

I shelled much corn during those days for the Cherokee Strip Opening. Some men invested all the money they had in corn for this purpose, knowing feed was in demand at these large openings.