

PIKE, B. M. (MRS.) INTERVIEW 4849

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BIOGRAPHY FORM 4849
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ruth Lee Gamblin

Report made on (date) July 14 1937

Name Mrs. B. M. Pike

Post Office Address Frederick, Okla.

Residence address (or location) North 9

DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 14 Year 1859

Place of birth Mississippi.

Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

is or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Write on blank sheets, if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____.

An Interview with Mr. B. M. Pike
North 9th St., Frederick Okla.
Ruth Lee Gamblin, Interviewer
July 14, 1937.

PIONEER EXPERIENCES

Lured by the same glamor and fascination of adventure as was his grandfather, Leadman Pike, Benjamin Pike came west to indulge in the thrills and hardships of the new country that his grandfather had helped explore.

My husband enlisted at Leavenworth, Kansas, to fight and act as interpreter in the Indian War. Five years later he returned to his native state, Kentucky, where he married Julia Ann Calloway in 1879.

Unable to resist the promises of wealth which the west seemed to offer; we traveled for four days and nights to Collin County, Texas, where we fished, hunted, and farmed for seven years. My husband had a ranch for three years, but was forced to sell it when the two caretakers spent about a month in the saloons and let all of the cattle starve.

After this incident he brought us by covered wagon to Mannsville, Indian Territory, where we settled on an

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Indian lease, living in a double log cabin for ten years. Most of our neighbors were Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians.

One night while hunting my husband stumbled over a dead Indian man. Seeing the smoke of a tepee in the distance, he went to tell the Indians of their dead tribesman. The Indians did not believe his story and were going to scalp him when another Indian man rode into camp and cleared the white man. They offered him the Peace Pipe and insisted that he spend the night with them.

When the southwestern part of what is now Oklahoma was opened for settlement, he rode three days on horseback to Lawton, Oklahoma, where land was being allotted by drawing numbers. The even numbers got one hundred and sixty acres of fertile sandy or black land. Mr. Pike was successful in drawing a rich farm south of what is now Tipton, Okla.

Back in Mannsville all of our earthly belongings were loaded onto four covered wagons. The morning we were to leave one of the drivers became ill and the wagon and entire contents had to be abandoned. There were no roads from Mannsville to the new homestead, but there were trails which could be followed for a few miles at a time.

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All creeks and rivers had to be forded, and when Indian teepees would be sighted, long paths around them would have to be taken. When we got to our homestead we built a three room box house and a half dugout. Most of the other settlers also lived in half dugouts or crude shacks. Although we had bought sufficient food for six months other supplies were obtained at Vernon, Texas. Red River had to be forded.

A blizzard that year killed several of the old settlers. The closest doctor was in Greer County, and it was practically impossible to get him to come in bad weather.

Mr. Pike made the run when Oklahoma City was opened. He and another fellow claimed the same city lot, so they matched to see which would sell his claim for five dollars. My husband lost.

Just before the Big Pasture was opened, we sold our farm for ten thousand dollars and moved to Frederick, where we rented a thirty-six room hotel for seventy-five dollars a month. After the Big Pasture opened my husband was able to buy a nine room house and retire from actual business, within ten months.

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My husband passed away in 1914. I am now seventy-five years of age and still reside in Frederick, Oklahoma. I receive a widow's pension for my husband's services in the Indian War.