

FOTH, J. A. (JACOB)

INTERVIEW

#8515

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FIELD WORKER IDA B. LANKFORD
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INTERVIEW WITH J. A. FOTH (JACOB A. FOTH)
RFD.1, Cordell, Oklahoma
Born October 6, 1872, Russia.

Father's name Henry Foth, Born Russia
died in Kansas, December 1888.

Mother's name Maria Graber. Born Russia
Now 88 years old and lives in Gotebo,
Oklahoma. Has been a widow for 46 years.

As a young single man I left Whitewater, Kansas,
in an emigrant freight car with other people in 1895.
This carload of goods and animals belonged to other
people and we arrived in Minco in March, 1895. I
drove a wagon and team to Washita County. It took
three days to make the trip from Minco. At the
end of the first days traveling we arrived at Boggy
Creek in Caddo County where we camped. The coyotes
yelped, the owls screeched, and the buzzing of the
trees kept me awake and somewhat frightened as I was
reminded of the story told in Kansas of the Indians
scalping the white men.

We were required to keep watch over our property
at night and while the rest slept, one was awake. I had

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an old army rifle (50-70) which was guaranteed to shoot a mile when new, and at this time would still shoot a great distance, but because the barrel was worn, it would make a terrible noise, almost like a cannon. As I was on watch some parties rode around our camp several times and then stopped where our horses were tied. I raised my gun and shot above their heads. They ducked their heads and left in a hurry.

I arrived in Washita County in March and in April I purchased a relinquishment through Mr. Berry's office in Cloud Chief. The relinquishment cost me \$55.00-thirty acres on the claim were in cultivation.

I soon went back to Kansas riding with some freighters to El Reno. I bought a ticket to Hennessey, and slept in a freight car that night. That night all cars were searched for the Dalton gang. I was not disturbed but that night one of the Dalton gang was killed and one was captured. I saw the captured one on the street next morning.

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I leased my land to a neighbor Jim Bliss for the year 1896.

I did not come back in the Fall of 1895; the law required a visit to the land every six months, but I had the chicken-pox. I made an affidavit to this effect before Mr. Barry in Cloud Chief in the Spring of 1896 when I came down to see my land.

In the Spring of 1897 I came down in a wagon from Kansas. George Harms came with me. We "batched" in the Summers of 1897 and 1898. Our house or dugout cost us sixty cents; thirty cents for a tree for the roof and 25 cents for a door. During these two years I walked six miles to church which was held where the Flynn school is now located.

I bought my groceries and traded at H.D. Young's Store in old Cordell, which was located about one and one half mile from New Cordell.

The dividing line between free grass and herd law was the section line west of my place.

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All west of that was still free range, and all east of it was herd law. Thus we had some difficulties with the cowboys. I remember Dr. Harms telling the cowboys in Young's Store that he would feed their cattle some pills that he was always carrying in a small handbag if their cattle bothered him.

I built a small one room house in the Summer of 1898; I hauled some of the lumber from El Reno; some from Geary later. It took three days to make the trip from El Reno.

In the Fall of 1898 I went back to Kansas and on October 2, 1898, I was married to Eva Harms. My honeymoon trip was made in a wagon to Oklahoma.

In the Spring of 1901, I was building a basement or cellar, the inspector McKinley visited me and told me that claim was cancelled as I had not visited the land in the Fall of 1895, within six months as the law required. I explained that I had made an affidavit with Barry in Cloud Chief that I had the chicken pox and could not come. He took these facts, was very kind, said that he would send

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all these facts to the Secretary of the Interior but gave me no assurance that I would get my patent. I had a wife and two baby girls and I spent several sleepless nights worrying about this matter. The affidavit I made with Barry in 1896 and the report by the inspector arrived in Washington at the same time. The Secretary of Interior's decision was favorable and patent was issued.

Going back to the trip when I returned to Kansas from Hennessey where I stayed the night, I walked along the railroad tracks and rode with the section hands until I was near enough to Kansas to buy a ticket with the money I had left after the ticket to Hennessey. I estimated that I walked fifty miles that day. I inquired at every station what the ticket cost to Whitewater, Kansas, and for many years I remembered the distance and the cost of a ticket from the various stations or towns along the Rock Island to Whitewater, Kansas.