

KERBO, W. T.

INTERVIEW

#8037

350

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

Worker's name

Ruth Kerbo.

This report made on (date)

July 24.

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1. Name

Mr. W. T. Kerbo.

2. Post Office Address

Mangum, Oklahoma, Route #2.

3. Residence address (or location)

16 1/2 miles southwest of Mangum.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month

March

Day

27

Year

1878

5. Place of birth

Bowling Green Kentucky.

6. Name of Father

J. M. Kerbo

Place of birth

Tennessee.

Other information about father

7. Name of Mother

Nancy Dunn.

Place of birth

Other information about mother

Notes 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. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

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Ruth Kerbo,
Interviewer.
July 24, 1937.

Interview with Mr. W. T. Kerbo
Route 2. Mangum, Oklahoma
Born March 27, 1872
Father-J. M. Kerbo
Mother-Nancy Dunn.

The first time I came to Greer County was in December, 1884. Jack Parkey had come on and settled near the Haystack Mountains. He left his meat hogs in Texas to be killed and brought later. I helped kill the hogs and brought the meat in a covered wagon. We did not have any money at all. We took our feed and enough food to last until our return.

The weather was cold and I was walking along beside the wagon. I happened to look down and saw a dime. I picked it up and when we came to a store I bought some tobacco.

I think I had about hundred pounds of meat on my wagon and I can't remember what Jack Parkey had in his wagon, probably his farming equipment. We had to stay all night at Mangum, and the next morning the ground was covered with snow. We couldn't see the trail and I sure

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dreaded to start out but finally made the trip all right, and I started for home the next day.

In the summer of 1895, Albert Hopkins, James Hopkins and I brought about one hundred head of horses to this country. We stayed all night at Dot which was later called Blair. Fifteen of our horses got away and we never found them. I was given a horse for helping to drive them through.

I went back to Iowa Park, Texas, and stayed until September 18, 1899, when I brought my family to Greer County seeking a home. I filed on a claim one-half mile west and one-half mile north of Blake. Frank Mathis filled out my filing papers.

I made a dugout 12x12 feet, covered it with logs and of nights the boys would ride yearlings over the top of it. We did not have a stove, so we cooked on a camp fire with a skillet and lid until the weather got too cold, then I dug out a square hole in the wall of the dugout for a fireplace. I took the post-hole digger and dug a round hole from the top down to the square hole to serve as the

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chimney for the fireplace. This was successful, ~~however~~ and we used this fireplace the remainder of the time we stayed there.

I went over to the mountains near Blair and cut posts off of the mountain to fence my claim.

I made one crop on my claim and it did not amount to much. I rented a place and lived on it four years, then bought a place one-half mile west of Kussell. I have lived on it ever since.

We made good crops until 1913, when a terrible drought struck the country.

When I first came here corn sold for twenty cents per bushel and cotton was eight cents per pound. Maize was worth fifteen cents per hundred. There was so much Maize everybody made good feed and we burned it for fuel. It was cheaper than any fuel we could buy.

Wages were seventy-five cents per day without board. The best flour sold for \$1.00 per sack, smoked bacon was eight and one-third cents per pound. Coffee sold at fifteen pounds for \$1.00.

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The first year I was here I bought a walking cultivator for \$15.00 and a sod plow for \$10.00. Couldn't borrow money unless you owned a large herd of cattle.

I hauled drinking water from an earth tank five miles away until I made a cistern to catch the rain water.

There were lots of prairie chickens. I always used a case of shotgun shells through the winter, hunting quail. They were very numerous. I saw a few deer and antelope over near the mountains at Blair.

The prairie dogs destroyed our crops until we had to put out poison to get rid of them. We soaked corn in water that had strychnine in it.

I hauled my first bale of cotton from Greer county to Quanah. On these trips I usually brought back a load of coal or other supplies. The old trail from Mangum to Quanah came across my place here.

Mr. Baumgardner ran the stage and he brought the mail from Quanah to Mangum. He left the mail for the settlers around here at K. W. Lanford's store.

The first gin was built at Russell in 1901. Corn

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made good, and sweet potatoes grew in abundance. Plums and grapes were plentiful on the rivers.

There was a one-room school house at Russell.

The Baptist Church was built in 1906. Reverend John F. Eder held a meeting under an arbor and eighty-five persons were baptized at the close of the meeting. The Church was organized after that.

Bill Hughes operated a ranch west of here. Their drift fence was three miles west of Russell, running north to Elm River and south to Turkey Creek. He owned lots of cattle. Jack Pigford also operated a ranch west of here.

Shortly after I came here my wife took sick and I had to go seven miles on horseback to get a doctor. I only had three dollars and when the doctor was ready to leave I told him I only had three dollars and I would give it to him and pay the rest when I could. He said, "I just aim to charge \$2.50."

Times were hard in the early day. Couldn't borrow money and we got along better than we do today.