

CARR, FRANK M.

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Form A-(S-149)

BIOGRAPHY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Alene D. McDowell

This report made on (date) August 17, 1937

1. Name Nelson F. Carr (Given by his son Frank M. Carr)

2. Post Office Address 316 Seneca, Bartlesville, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 2 Year 1844

5. Place of birth Saratoga, New York

6. Name of Father William Henry Carr Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father Died in 1848 in New York.

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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Alene D. McDowell  
Interviewer  
August 17, 1937.

Interview with Frank M. Carr  
316 Seneca Avenue,  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

My father, Nelson Franklin Carr, was born September 2, 1844, in Saratoga, Wilton County, New York.

His father, William Henry Carr, died in 1848.

My father attended school at the age of four years, and at the age of nine years, he assumed the responsibility of the family, consisting of his mother and two sisters. At the age of fifteen years, he with his mother and two sisters, decided there were greater opportunities for expansion in the west, so sold their property in Saratoga Springs, and in April, 1859, they started on their long trip west. They traveled by railroad to Pleasant Hill, Missouri, that being the terminal of the Missouri Pacific Railroad, and as far west as the railroad extended.

There they bought an ox team, and continued on the journey. They came on west to Kansas City. At that time Kansas City had a population of a few hundred people and had two hotels. Young Nelson drove his ox team down what

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is now Main Street in Kansas City, and continued southwest, finally locating at Fort Scott, Kansas, August 7, 1859.

My father being the head of the family, the Kansas law at that time allowed him to file on a 160 acre homestead. His mother also filed on a 160 acre homestead, she being a widow gave her the same right as my father. They filed on 320 acres, located between Fort Scott and Chetopa, near what was known as Timber Hill, and he started to improve their new home, and built the first frame house in Labette County, Kansas.

When the family was established in their new home, he returned to Saratoga Springs, in August 1860, and finished his high school education. After his return to the west in 1861, he took a position as bookkeeper with a wholesale firm in Fort Scott. He held this position until 1862; then resigned to enlist in the United States Army, in the 6th Kansas Cavalry, Company "B" under Colonel W. R. Judson, where he served until he received his discharge from the army in 1865.

In the early part of 1866 he built a trading

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post and established a fur trade with the Osage and other tribes of Indians who inhabited Kansas at that time. Later this trading post became the city of Oswego; therefore, my father became the founder of Oswego, Kansas. He was appointed the first postmaster of this town, November 7, 1866. I have a copy of his certificate of appointment to this office, signed by Alexander W. Randall, Postmaster General.

He established a good business with the Osages, Delawares and a few Cherokees, and through his business dealings he became acquainted with Mr. Hilliard Rogers, a half breed Cherokee, who was at that time a highly trusted Government scout, under General Zachary Taylor and was highly honored by all who knew him.

Mr. Rogers and my father became great friends, and Mr. Rogers invited him to visit his home. On one of these visits my father met my mother, Miss Sarah Ann Rogers, a beautiful girl of eighteen years, and fell in love with her. He secured the consent of her parents for her hand in marriage and on August 25, 1866, they were married. They made their home at the Indian

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Trading Post at Oswego, Kansas, from August 1866 to September 1867.

My father wishing to expand his fur trading started southwest to establish a new location. In April, 1867, he started on horseback, on a black Morgan and Steel Dust horse, he had bought from an Arapaho Indian.

The new Indian Trading Post was established one and one-half miles north and three-quarters of a mile west of the present city of Bartlesville, on September 5, 1867, and on September 20, 1867, he sold his business in Kansas and moved his stock of goods to his new location in the Indian Territory, in what is now Washington County, Oklahoma, northwest of Bartlesville.

He built a log store building and his father-in-law, Mr. Rogers, built a log dwelling house near the trading post. This post was built on the Black Dog Trail, where it crosses Caney River. This was originally the old Spanish Trail from Saint Louis, Missouri, to Los Angeles, California, later known as the Black Dog Trail, named for Chief Black Dog, a prominent Osage Chief.

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My father built his dwelling house a mile north and a little east of the trading post. At the present time, this home belongs to my sister, Mrs. Josie May Brower.

My father maintained this post until September, 1869, when a band of 200 Osage warriors, led by Chief Black Dog and Pete Corndropper, met and fought a pitched battle with a war party of Cheyennes near what is now Perry, Oklahoma. After this battle, the Osages were returning to their reservation in Kansas. Their route passed my father's trading post and about 190 or 200 warriors rode up to the post and demanded all of the merchandise in the store. Mr. A. T. Dickerman was my father's manager and bookkeeper and when they demanded the supply of merchandise on hand, he told them to help themselves, which they did. My father freighted from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and was away at the time. Chief Black Dog rounded up about fifty ponies and proceeded to pack the ponies with the merchandise. By the time the ponies were all loaded, there was nothing left in the store. One of the warriors packed a sack of beans for several miles before he discovered

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it was beans instead of coffee. He then took his hunting knife and ripped the sack open and wasted the beans, angry because the sack did not contain coffee.

My father had all of his ready cash invested in his trading post, and in improving his 1,000 acre farm. He had about \$4,000 invested in merchandise, and when he was robbed it ended his ambition as an Indian Trader and merchant.

The Osages were wards of the United States Government, and he filed a suit against the Government for the price of the merchandise taken by the Indians. This suit was in court for twenty-eight years, and he finally collected 40% of the valuation of the goods, without interest.

His next enterprise was the timber business, producing and marketing lumber, he also produced and ground meal.

In 1870 he cut the channel from one side of Caney River to the other and arched a tunnel over with sandstone, which still stands just south of where the John Bitinis fruit stand is now located. This gave him

power to turn a mill wheel. He shipped two stone burrs to grind meal from New York City and these two burrs represent the first enterprise of producing meal in northern Oklahoma. This mill site laid the foundation for what is now Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

My father later sold this mill site to Colonel Jacob H. Bartles, who owned a store on Turkey Creek, east of Bartlesville. I have a photostatic picture of the original transfer of the mill site from my father to Mr. Bartles, dated March 20, 1875. This deed is written in my father's hand writing. It reads as follows:

Know all men by these present that I Nelson F. Carr and Sarah Carr of Cooweescoowee District, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, have this day, for and in consideration of the sum of One Thousand Dollars, to the said N. F. Carr and Sarah Carr in hand paid by J.H. Bartles of the Cooweescoowee District, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged granted bargained and sold and by these presents do grant, bargain and sell forever the following described premises and improvements situated on Caney River: the water mill and all the fixtures,



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blacksmith shop and all the fixtures and tools, and including the claim and everything on said claim at the date of this article, lying about two and one-half miles more or less, east of the 96th line Cherokee Nation.

To have and to hold the above granted premises to the aforesaid, J. H. Bartles, heirs and assigns, to his use and behoof forever, and I, the said N. F. Carr and Sarah Carr, for myself, my heirs, executors and Administrators do covenant to, and with the said J. H. Bartles, heirs and assigns, that I am lawfully seized in fee simple of the above said premises; that they are free from all incumbrances; that I have a good right to sell and convey the same to the said J. H. Bartles, his heirs and assigns, forever as aforesaid, and that I will, and my heirs, executors and administrators shall warrant and defend the same to the said J. H. Bartles, his heirs and assigns, forever and against the lawful claims and demands of all persons whomsoever. In witness whereof I, Nelson F. Carr and Sarah Carr, have here unto set our hands and affixed our seals this 20th day of March, Eighteen Hundred and Seventy-five.

Nelson F. Carr (Seal)  
Sarah Carr (Seal)

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Signed and delivered in the presence of witness

his Hector Ross

X  
mark

J. W. Higgins

his Andy Daniels

X  
mark

Mr. Bartles moved his store to the new location and later built a modern flour mill on this mill site.

The first trip my father made with freight when removing his merchandise from his trading post in Kansas, then called, Old Parker, from there west to his trading post on Caney River. After coming through Timber Hills, west of Coffeyville, He began to see wild game and counted 75 deer between Timber Hills and where the city of Dewey now stands. There were hundreds of deer, thousands of wild turkey and the prairie was covered with wild prairie chicken, besides thousands of wild fowl that inhabited this part of the world.

A white man married to a Cherokee, prior to 1871, was given thereby the right to participate in tribal affairs in the Cherokee government, except that he could not hold office. But the Cherokee law re-

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quired a couple to be married by the Cherokee laws. my father and mother were married in Kansas in 1866 and remarried in the Cherokee Nation in 1867, which made him a citizen of the Cherokee Nation, and he received his allotment of land the same as a Cherokee by blood.

In the year of 1874 my father built the first school house in what is now Washington County, just south of his old ranch, and employed Miss Betty Smith from Kansas to teach the eighteen scholars, and he maintained the expense of this school.

After my father disposed of his lumber mill and grist mill, he gave his full time to the development of the finest farm in Washington County. At one time he had 5,000 acres of fine fertile land under fence, 1,000 acres of this land was in cultivation. In 1884 he raised 47,000 bushels of corn on this farm.

My father was in stock business along in connection with his agriculture enterprise. He raised Steel Dust and Morgan horses and Hereford cattle. At one time he had several thousand head of cattle and around twelve

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hundred blooded horses, running on the range that he controlled, extending from Caney River on the west to the Verdigris River on the east. This range extended 27 miles east and west and 35 miles north and south. In 1905 my father sold his stock and devoted his full time to his oil interests.

He leased nineteen eighty acre tracts to the Caney Valley Oil and Gas Company, which was composed of W. S. Haydure, George B. Keeler, Sam O. Hopst, Frank Bucher, and Parr Bucher. They drilled over 100 producing wells on the Nelson E. Carr farm, property owned by him and his family. The Carr family received a royalty and bonus from their oil properties of around \$1,000,000.

My father sold the northwest 160 acres of his farm to Mr. Sid Bell, who allotted two of his children on this tract, of 80 acres each, and leased it to Mr. Frank Phillips, who with his associates drilled for oil and brought in some nice producing wells. This was the start of one of the greatest independent oil companies in the west, the Phillips Petroleum Company, Mr. Frank Phillips is the president of this company.

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In 1879 my father was appointed to the United States Secret Service, and not one of his family knew this, until after his death when we found his papers when going through his desk.

My father affiliated with the Keystone Lodge of the Master Masons in 1866 at Old Parker, now Coffeyville, Kansas, and transferred to Bartlesville about 15 years before his death.

He reared a family of eight children, three boys and five girls. Edward R. died in 1877 at the age of 9 years; Ida J., wife of John H. Johnson, lives on part of the Carr ranch; Grace Maude, wife of Matt Elam, died in 1889; William Arthur, died in 1934; Frank M., living in Bartlesville; Lula B, wife of W. M. Keeler(now deceased) and mother of Mrs. K. S. Adams and Billy Keeler, living in Bartlesville; Josie May, wife of L. J. Brower, who still has her home where our father first settled in 1867; Beulah Mable, wife of S. C. Brady, living in Bartlesville.

In 1909 my father bought a nice home on Creek Avenue in Bartlesville, where he and my mother lived until their death. My father passed away in November, 1925,

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and my mother followed him in death, in August 1929.

They were laid to rest in the Mausoleum in White Rose Cemetery, in Bartlesville.