

COOK, E. H.

INTERVIEW

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INDEX CARDS:

Opening- Cheyenne-Arapaho
Arapaho
Clinton
Early Schools
Weatherford
Place Names
Indian Trouble

COOK, E. H. INTERVIEW. BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project, for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Maude M. Fink

This report made on (date) July 14 1937

1. Name E. H. Cook

2. Post Office Address Clinton, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 424 South 13th Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 20 Year 1866.

5. Place of birth Tennessee.

6. Name of Father John Cook Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information (about father) _____

7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Bowden Place of birth Pope County, Arkansas.

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 7.

Maude Fink,
Interviewer.

An Interview with Mr. E. H. Cook,
424 South 13th Street, Clinton, Okla.

Mr. E. H. Cook came from Pope County, Arkansas,
for the purpose of homesteading.

The seventh day of May, 1892, Mr. Arges published
the first paper at Arapaho, Oklahoma.

Mr. Cook homesteaded three miles east of Clinton.
One day he and his father-in-law, E. H. Upchurch, and
brother-in-law, E. V. Upchurch, drove over to Arapaho.
They were in a tent by permission eating their dinner
when there came a storm which struck the tent and tore
it up. After the storm all three of the men were in
one pile, clutched together. All the tents at Arapaho
were destroyed, but no one was killed.

In May, after the opening in April, all the people
were very poor. Mr. E. H. Upchurch was the first one
to be appointed commissioner of this county.

Mr. Cook lived three miles east of town. There
was a division between the herd law and the free grass
people, and there were many disturbances in different
districts.

Dead Woman's Canyon derived its name because a group
of people who were traveling through the country stopped

-2-

on this creek to stay all night. One of the women with them died, and they buried her there. It has since been known as Dead Woman's Canyon. There were no roads, just trails in those days.

The Rock Island was built out of Weatherford. Weatherford was the terminal station for five years.

Beach Erick was a banker at Weatherford and he was out looking for a townsite. He went over into Washita County where a man by the name of Parker had settled on the river bottom. Parker had driven here from Arkansas, and Beach Erick bought land from Parker for the purpose of establishing a townsite. This town was ~~known~~ as Parkersburg, but the place was a very poor location for a town as the creek there overflowed. The present Clinton townsite had already been discussed so on the 3rd or 4th of June, 1903, the cattlemen got orders through Congress for a townsite at Clinton. This was on land the cattlemen had leased from Indian owners.

Mr. Cook came from Arkansas to homestead with no team, no money, a wife and two children. On the seventh of June he went back to El Reno and worked on the section line. In 1893 about the twentieth of September, he went to the Chickasaw Nation and picked cotton. It was five years before he could buy a team.

After Mr. Cook got to farming he raised kaffir corn and corn. Then several years later he raised cotton, wheat and oats. They bought their meal and flour at El Reno where most freighting was done, and at Minco. Later there was a grist mill on Deer Creek, northeast of Weatherford. After Weatherford was established, several took their wheat over there and exchanged it for flour.

It took two days to get the mail from El Reno to Arapaho. It came in on the stage coach, which made stops at certain distances, where teams were changed.

Frank Fillmore was the founder of the Arapaho Bee, the first newspaper. Mr. J. W. Lawton later joined him.

When they made the Run, everybody just ran. They did not know where they were going. They were on horseback, in two wheel buggies, heavy buggies, wagons, and every other way. People just struck out and went to running, following the trails that the Indians had made. The corner stones were marked with certain marks made on them with an axe, but no one knew what they meant. This county was known as G. County. It was the Arapaho and Cheyenne Reservation.

The people attended church on April 18, 1892, on the Five Mile Creek in Caddo County. This was the day before the run. There were several people camped together and

there was a preacher among the crowd. This preacher was Mr. Cook's father-in-law, ^{His father-in-law} being a minister of the gospel made Mr. Cook sort of a boss over the small colony of people. He went to work and organized a community church at Chapel Hill, two or three years after settlement.

Schools were soon established. Anna Grove was the first teacher, and she taught for fifteen dollars a month and her board and room didn't cost her anything. She would stay one week with a family in the neighborhood and the next week she would stay with some one else. The children just went to school. They did not have classes divided up like they are today. This Anna Grove's father was an old soldier. Nellie Carbon was the second teacher, she likewise stayed with the patrons of the neighborhood. ~~Hal~~ Headlock was the third teacher. He was a young man and he married Anna Grove. All three teachers taught in a dug-out and were the first three teachers in Custer County, then known as old G County.

When Clinton was first being formed it was nothing but tents and dug-outs. Weatherford was a big corn field. They tore a building down at Weatherford about ten years ago that had been used for a saloon building in the early days, and it had corn stubble under it.

-5-

The old timers named these creeks and flats.

Scatter Creek was named because during the Run, the people were camped on it and when the signal was given, people just scattered, so they called it Scatter Creek. Jack Rabbit Flat was named because there were so many rabbits in this particular part of the country. One time a man was driving through this flat and a rabbit jumped up in front of his team. He unhitched his mule and took in after it, chasing it over a hill, but he caught his rabbit.

At Quartermaster, there was trouble between the cattlemen and the Indians. They called it the "Indian War". The Indians and cowmen in some parts of the country were for free grass and in other parts of the country were for herd law. East of Clinton was the herd law district. The Indians got tired of being trespassed upon by the stockmen and an Indian tied a cowboy's horse to a wagon. The cowpuncher, whose name was Breeding, went down to the village on the creek and demanded his pony from the Indians, but the Indians would not give it up. Several Indians overpowered the cowpuncher and told him to get off their place, which he did, but later he returned. The Indians came out with guns and arrows, but Breeding cut his horse loose from the wagon and started

COOK, E. H. INTERVIEW.

-6-

leading it off, trying to make his getaway. An Indian shot and cut one of the reins on the horse's bridle that Breeding was riding. The horse became unmanageable and the Indians shot Breeding and killed him. This started bitter feeling between the whites and the Indians. The whites formed a little army of farmers and neighbors, and the reports went to the County Sheriff of Custer County at Arapaho, whose name was J. T. Malone. The white people demanded that he get the Indian who killed Breeding. The whites sent a runner on horseback to Fort Reno and the Indians also sent one asking for protection and for the soldiers to come. The Indian runner beat the white runner by a period of four hours, and the soldiers were on their way with material quite a ways from Fort Reno, when the white man met them. Both parties were excited.

J. T. Malone, the sheriff, was commanded by the citizens of that part of the country to get the Indian at once. They forced him to go with them. After getting there, they demanded he go into the Indian camp and get the Indian who shot and killed Breeding. The sheriff appealed to the citizens to wait until the soldiers got there and give it into their hands. He asked the time to be set for two o'clock and not to rush him in. He knew it was certain death if he went after the

Indian. The people gave him till two o'clock and if the soldiers had not arrived at that time they would force him to go. At the stated time the soldiers did not appear and they renewed their demands that he go in, but he persuaded them and was given more time. He was allowed till four o'clock. The sheriff was frightened. He did not think the soldiers would get there in time, but a five minutes to four he saw the Blue Coats coming over the hill. Mr. Malone went out and told the soldiers what had happened, but they never did anything with the Indian.

Mr. and Mrs. Cook have lived in Custer County for forty-five years. They are the parents of fourteen children, born in and around Clinton. They are rearing a granddaughter now.