

HASKINS, WILBER ISAAC

INTERVIEW

#8022

**103**

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RECORDS SECTION

INTERVIEW

PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

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Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. DuncanThis report made on (date) July 12, July 12 19371. Name Wilbur Isaac Haskins2. Post Office Address Jefferson, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) 1 N. 4 3/4 West4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month May Day 6 Year 18685. Place of birth Iona County, Michigan6. Name of Father Frances Haskins Place of birth OhioOther information about father Farmer7. Name of Mother Eliza Jane Lumbort Place of birth OhioOther information about mother Trapped and helped farm.

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 Three typed sheets.

Elizabeth L. Duncan  
Interviewer  
July 12, 1937

Interview with  
Wilber Isaac Haskins  
Jefferson, Oklahoma.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Mr. Haskins made the run at the opening of the Cherokee Strip, September 16, 1893, west of Caldwell. It was just one hour from the time the guns were fired at twelve o'clock noon until he had staked his claim. His homestead was located one mile north and four and three quarters west of Jefferson. As soon as he staked his claim, he began to dig up some sod. He stayed all night on his claim, tying his horse to his foot so that he could not stray away.

The next day, Mr. Haskins started out to look for his chuck wagon. One of the neighbors came along to drive the wagon for Mr. Haskins. Mr. Haskins found him coming down the Old Chisholm Trail between Jefferson and Medford. They got back to his homestead that evening and pitched their tents. The next day he started to spade up some sod so that he could show that he was going to prove up on the place.

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The next week, Mr. Haskins went back to Kansas to get the rest of his household goods and stock.

The following week he returned to his homestead, bringing with him four horses, five cows, one dog, two dozen chickens and what furniture he had. He also brought seeds, wheat, corn, kaffir corn and cane from Mt. Hope, Kansas. After his return he started to build a large dugout and sod house combined. There were four windows in the house. After his house was completed, he borrowed a sod plow so he might plant some wheat, breaking some forty acres during the fall and winter.

In the spring, he planted corn but it burnt up as it was very dry. That summer he began to witch for a well. He located one and drilled it, but the water was salty and "gyppy." He started another but it was salty. While witching for the third one, Mrs. Haskins ran across a place that seemed to be pretty muddy all the time. The horses had tramped around this place, showing that there seemed to be a spring near. When Mrs. Haskins showed the place to Mr. Haskins, he began to trace it, and found a rocky ledge under a bunch of willows. He started to clean

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the hole out, and this supplied them with all the water they needed for the stock and house use. The spring still stands. Mr. Haskins built a basin out of cement for the horses to drink from and piped some off to another basin for the house use.

That summer he bought a plow so he could break more sod. He broke 15 acres and planted it in wheat by hand as he had no planting machinery.

That fall Mr. Haskins had to go back to Kansas to get some feed for the cattle, a distance of forty miles. He made about seven trips back and forth and on the last trip, he got caught in an awful storm on his way back. They were five miles from home when the storm struck, turning the wagon over and killing one horse. The only thing that saved Mr. Haskins when the storm overturned the wagon was the hay that fell on him first before the wagon struck him, which certainly would have crushed him to death had not the fodder and hay covered him first. When he regained consciousness, he was plastered with mud and hay and the side boards lay on him. The rain

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revived him and he crawled out from under all of it. He hurt all over and did not know where he really was hurt worst. When he got up on his feet, he looked around to see how much damage it had done. One horse was still hitched to the wagon, dead, the other was nowhere to be seen.

The storm seemed to have followed the creek. He was no more than twenty-five rods from the creek. The storm had torn up everything within reach, even the trees were uprooted in places.

Mr. Haskins started on foot toward home, suffering terrible agony in his bruised body, but when he got home there was his horse with part of the wagon tongue still fastened to his harness.

That winter was severe and much stock starved to death. The wheat crop burned up, also the corn.

In the fall of 1895, he planted corn and wheat again, also kaffir corn. It produced pretty fair. Then in 1896, they planted corn, wheat and kaffir and harvested a bumper crop of wheat, and a fair crop of corn and

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kaffir. After that, he bought a sod plow, drill and another wagon.

In the year of 1898, the Haskins built another house which still stands, except that more has been added. It was 20 x 24.

The following year, he built a blacksmith shop. He had owned a blacksmith shop in Kansas, so besides farming he was a blacksmith. He worked at it for thirty-two years. Work for miles around was brought to him and he was kept busy all the time.

Some of the years that followed their coming to Oklahoma were prosperous and some were lean, yet he was happy with his family. He still lives on the farm, but he is an invalid now.