

PALMER, RALPH J.

INTERVIEW

#12259

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field Worker's name Charles H. Holt

This report made on (date) November 24, 1937

1. Name Reverend Ralph J. Palmer

2. Post Office Address Hominy, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Methodist Parsonage

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 15 Year 1891

5. Place of birth Okarche, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father Winfield Palmer Place of birth Ohio

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Estelle Mayfield Place of birth Indiana

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 4

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Interview with Reverend Ralph J. Palmer,
Hominy, Oklahoma.

The Reverend Mr. Ralph J. Palmer, a Methodist Minister, was born in 1891 near Okarche. His parents came to the Territory in 1890 from Kansas settling near Okarche. The trip was made in covered wagons and on the trip Mr. Palmer's older brother had the whooping cough and was kept on a pillow during the entire trip. The parents started farming, building a dugout and lining it with sod. This house is where the Reverend Mr. Palmer was born.

There were about fifteen families who came from Kansas near the place in Kansas from which the Palmer family came, and settled in the same community. They all set to work to build a substantial community, which they did and many of them still live there. Mr. Palmer's father and mother lived on the same place until their deaths a few years ago.

On the raw land there was not much of a crop raised the first year or two. The old sod plows were used at first and the wheat was sowed by hand. The old tongueless cultivator was used in cultivating corn.

Drouths were bad on crops and the land being raw made the drouths more harmful. The year of 1897, the drouth was so severe that there were no crops raised, except turnips

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which were planted in the late summer where other crops had burned up but having fall rains they had an enormous crop of turnips. Mr. Palmer was about six years old at the time and remembers the turnips being harvested and believes that there were piles of turnips as large as some of the houses in the community.

There was no school at first but a sod school house was soon built which was used as a church. Also, a few years later, a frame school building was built and two teachers were employed and up to the present day the school has supported two teachers, who teach up to the tenth grade. This school is the one which the Reverend Mr. Palmer attended until he and his brother attended school at Edmond. They rode their bicycles twenty-six miles each week to Edmond; "batching" at Edmond and going home on week-ends on their bicycles.

A church was organized also about the time that the second school house was built. It was organized by Grandpa Hostetter and still stands. Neither the school nor the church up to the present day has had any indebtedness.

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The cemetery in the community is the Palmer Cemetery in which Mr. Palmer's mother and father are buried.

The first R.F.D. Mail Route in the county served this community.

The Ross Brothers were cattle rustlers and lived on three quarter sections of land of which the fourth quarter in the section was the Palmer farm. The Ross Brothers never bothered any of the neighbors' stock, but could "rustle" a distance away and bring the cattle home.

The Ross Brothers had wire for enclosures around their place that was stronger and different from any wire anyone in the neighborhood had ever seen.

On the Palmer quarter when they settled on it, was a dugout house and it was never known who built it, but it was generally believed that the Ross Brothers built it to try to keep anyone from settling next to them or on the same section.

This community had the first rural phones in that section of the country.

There was an Apache Indian named Geronimo who was feared in that part of the Territory. He had sixteen men or followers

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and it was said that he and his men had so much endurance that they could out-run horses a distance of fifty miles and it was said, too, that he had taken twenty-six scalps. He was captured and taken to Fort Sill.

There were several years that corn was so cheap that it was burned for fuel, being cheaper than wood or coal.

Elijah H. Long, a relative of the Reverend Mr. Palmer, owned and raised many horses and ponies; he came to the Territory and settled in No-Man's-Land in what is now Beaver County, increasing his herds of horses all the time and when he found a homesteader who was dissatisfied and wanted to sell out and get away Mr. Long would trade him some horses and give him some cash for his homestead. So in that way he became the owner of much land.

The Reverend Mr. Palmer studied for the ministry and completed his studies in 1912 and in 1913 was pastor of the church in the old home community where he was raised.

He is one of eleven children of whom ten are still living.

Some of the old-timers in his community were Alva Scott, I. M. Wallace, a family named Daniels and a family named Gravenhorse.

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