

PARKEY, PETER

INTERVIEW

#4154

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PARKEY, PETE. INTERVIEW.

Form A-(S-149)

BIOGRAPHY FORM

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ruth Kerbo.

This report made on (date) May 20, 1937

1. Name Peter Parkey.

2. Post Office Address Mangum, Oklahoma. Route 2.

3. Residence address (or location) Seventeen miles southwest of Mangum.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month September Day 9 Year 1860.

5. Place of birth Milan, Missouri.

6. Name of Father Peter Parkey. Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about father Buried in Missouri.

7. Name of Mother Lydia Baker Place of birth Tennessee.

Other information about mother Buried at Russell, Oklahoma.

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.

Ruth Kerbo,
Interviewer.

An Interview With Peter Parkey,
Seventeen miles southwest of
Mangum, Oklahoma.

Peter Parkey came to Greer County in 1890. He had traded seven hundred and fifty acres of good land near Iowa Park and Wichita Falls, Texas, for two hundred and fifty head of horses. He drove them through to this country, and located near Jester. He did not have to buy feed for them, but had plenty of good grass and he thought in a short time he could make a good profit from them. After keeping them until they had increased to three hundred head the little colts began to disappear and every day others would be missing until a close check-up revealed the loafer wolves were killing and eating them. Wolves were very numerous there near the Haystack Mountains.

Finally after a hard winter and drouth in the spring, Mr. Parkey got discouraged and sold out for \$1800.00 and went back to Iowa Park, Texas, where he married and came back to Greer County to file on a claim. He located seventeen miles southwest of Mangum.

They traveled in covered wagons, making the trip in four and one half days. Mr. Parkey's brother came with them. They had two covered wagons, a camping outfit, cook stove,

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bed, home-made table, and some chairs. Also a large skillet and lid which Mrs. Parkey used to cook their food in on the trip from Iowa Park. She also baked bread in it; later the fireplace in their dug-out was used.

Mr. Parkey and his brother made a dug-out which had two rooms, (this was called a double dug-out) with a fire place in one end. It was covered with logs and earth and ceiled with canvas to keep the dirt from falling down on them.

Snakes were so numerous they would crawl on this canvas ceiling and Mrs. Parkey would stick them with table forks or anything in reach. One cold winter night the Parkeys were sitting by the fireplace and a big rattlesnake dropped from the ceiling into the fireplace burning himself to death.

On one occasion a bad cloud came up in the night, and a deluge of rain fell, flooding the whole country in a short time. Rats had made holes in the top of the dug-out and water ran in from these holes and at the door, which resembled a cellar door, until their bedding and supplies were floating around.

Later Mr. Parkey built a half dug-out and bought enough duck to make a tent which was used for their bed room.

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When he arrived here he had only two dollars, and the brother was broke.

They used cottonwood bark for smoking tobacco.

If they needed any money they would sell a pony, or pick up a load of bones, which were worth from \$7 to \$8 a ton. They raised their own meat hogs. Hogs sold for \$1.00 to \$3.00 each. Corn was 25 cents to \$1.00 per bushel. Mr. Parkey sold 200 bushels of corn one year for 50 cents per bushel. Crops were good in the new land.

They got their supplies from Quanah, Texas. There wasn't anything much at Mangum. They hauled their cotton to Quanah, also, to be ginned. It would take two days to make the trip if the weather was good, and if it rained sometimes they would be gone for a week or two. There were no bridges on any of the streams and oftentimes they would get stuck in the mud. The roads were just trails.

Cotton sold for four cents per pound and later for ten cents. They could buy good shoes for \$2.00.

Prairie chickens and quail were numerous. They would often go out and kill a bunch of quail for supper. Sometimes they would get enough at one time for two or three meals.

Mr. Parkey saw one bear near the Haystack Mountains

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but didn't get to kill it.

The people never thought much about dressing fine in the early days. The men generally wore overalls, and hardly knew what a necktie was. Women wore their cotton check dresses and bonnets to preachingservices.

The settlers held meetings at the different homes about over the neighborhood. In the first season several families would go gather wild grapes and plums; also go on fishing trips, taking along a camping outfit and staying a day or two.

Mr Parkey hauled lumber from Quanah and built a two-room house on his farm. This house is still standing, but has been moved from his place, and is being used for a barn.

In 1902 an epidemic of smallpox broke out in the country. Several members of Mr. Parkey's family contracted the disease; others were vaccinated after it was determined what the disease was. His wife was the last member of the family to contract the disease and died, leaving him with several small children. He reared his children to be grown and remained on his farm until 1927 when he sold out to his son and went to Florida with his two daughters, each of them getting employment there. He remained in Florida one year when he came back to Oklahoma. Each winter, however, since

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that time he spends sometime in Florida.

He plants a garden every year and enjoys working it.

He is still very active despite his years of hard work.