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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
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Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

42142

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.This report made on (date) May 12th 1937.Lone Wolf Oklahoma.

1. Name Francis Marion Higgins
2. Post Office Address Lone Wolf Okla.
3. Residence address (or location) One Block South of Main St.
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month October Day 9th Year 1856.
5. Place of birth Doniphan Co. Kansas. Then a Territory.

6. Name of Father John Wesley Higgins place of birth not givenOther information about father Born 1832 Union soldier.7. Name of Mother Elizabeth Jane Houston Place of birth Indiana.Other information about mother Was a relative of GeneralSam Houston of Texas fame.

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 3 (three).

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INTERVIEW WITH FRANCIS MARION HIGGINS

Lone Wolf, Oklahoma

Ethel B. Tackitt, Field Worker

May 12, 1937

I was born on October 9, 1858, in Doniphan County, Kansas, then a Territory, near what is now Honeywell. My father was John Wesley Higgins and my mother was Elizabeth Jane Houston Higgins, a relative of General Sam Houston of Texas.

My early memory is of the stormy days just before the Civil War and troubles of the locality during and following the War. My father joined the Union Army. I remember the Price's raid.

Our home was a farm not far from the line of the Indian Territory and I, with my brothers, herded our cattle down there much of the time for the grass was fine and nobody objected. We also hauled wood and posts from there for use on our farm. Occasionally we would meet a band of Indians out hunting but they never bothered us, nor did we bother them. They were mostly Osages.

Much of the time the hot winds burned up our crops, and getting food was often a problem. We could kill game but ammunition was not plentiful. Mother made our clothes and we managed.

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We were much in sympathy with Captain David L. Payne and his efforts to open the Territory for white settlement. So when the proclamation was made that the country should be opened, we felt sure that we could settle on the claims we had picked out, as we had known the country all our lives. So on the morning of April 22, 1889, I, with my brothers, Sam E., Leonard E., and John W. Higgins, stood on the line, all in a good wagon and with a good team of horses.

We had agreed that we would drive through and each one was to drop off the wagon when we came to his claim. The last one was to keep the wagon and team.

When the gun was fired at twelve o'clock noon, we struck out. One of the boys looking behind said, "Look we are ahead", when we got on top of a rise. But one of the other boys said, "Just look ahead, It looks like the world is full of people." There was a bigger crowd ahead than there was behind.

We drove clear through the opened country and never found a single spot that was not covered. There were people plowing, digging wells, digging post holes and most everything you could think of. We went back home but we had learned something.

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The next opening, September 22, 1891, when the Iowa, Sac and Fox, Pottawatomie and Shawnee Reservations opened, we four again made the run. This time we got the fastest horses we could afford and we made the run in earnest. We stood in line from about ten o'clock one morning until twelve o'clock next day. We had a man with a chuck-wagon and feed and water for our horses. I rode a bay race horse. This time I got a fine location near the present town of Blackwell in Kay County and my brother, John W., got a claim just across the line from me. My brother, Sam, got a claim but Leonard H. did not.

I made a home on this place but my wife had died, leaving me with four small children. These my parents and my brother Leonard were raising for me so I had them come down and live on the farm and I relinquished my claim to my brother Leonard and my father, and I went out to work at my trade, which is brick masonry. I have erected many of the buildings in Enid, Blackwell and other towns of Oklahoma.

Soon after the Kiowa country opened in 1901, I came to Lone Wolf and erected the first brick building in the town, for my brother, John W., who put in a General Mercantile Store, among the first in the town.

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I was eighty years old the ninth day of last October and those eighty years have been spent in and around Oklahoma. In that time I have seen it pass from a wilderness to its present highly developed state. I have erected buildings, laid pavement, farmed, bought and sold both grain and cotton and am leaving five sons and four daughters, with a host of grand-children to carry on in Oklahoma.