

ROGERS, WILLIAM T.

INTERVIEW

#8413

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INTERVIEW

BIOGRAPHY FORM

ROGERS, WILLIAM T. WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

8413

Interviewer's name Mildred B. McFarland

Report made on (date) August, 23, 1937

Name William T. Rogers

Post Office Address Edmond, Oklahoma

Residence address (or location) 132 W. Main St.

DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 4 Year 1868

Place of birth Baldwyn, Mississippi

Name of Father John Rogers Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about father Born in 1841

Name of Mother Melissa Langford Rogers Place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother Born in 1843

For complete narrative by the field worker, dealing with the life and story of person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Use on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Interview with William T. Rogers
Edmond Oklahoma

In the year 1878, I moved to a farm between Tahlequah and Fort Gibson, with my parents from Baldwyn, Mississippi. I was ten years old at that time. This was called the Cherokee Nation then. We lived on what was known as "Fourteen mile Creek", we stayed there until 1889.

On April 11th, we started for Edmond. We drove two covered wagons with a yoke of oxen hitched to each one. We brought all our household furniture and provisions with us. We had to leave our stove because we had no room in the wagons.

Eight miles west of Muskogee we met two men with their families, Bill Cope and John Carter, who also were on their way to Edmond. They, too, were driving oxen. We joined them to continue the trip. We traveled steadily, camping only long enough to eat and sleep awhile. We arrived on the line Saturday, April 20th. We camped on a Creek until Monday, April 22nd, then started the run.

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My father, sister and myself placed our flags three miles north of Edmond. Father and my sister staked claims in the same section, while I was in the next. I had been very sick with chills, and the day I was supposed to file my claim I was not able to attend^{to} it. Dr. Wood Howard had come out to see me and he offered me \$50 for it. As we needed maney so badly I sold it to him. After my folks had their claims straightened out, I bought a sod plow and seed to plant so we could start making a crop on my sister's place.

We lived in a shelter made from the canvas we had used on the wagons. As we had no stove we had to cook over an open fire. We had long legged kettles and skilletts, that we placed in the hot coals. I sold two of the oxen to help pay expenses until we harvested a crop. After a while we cut logs and built cabins on both claims.

We lived mostly on beans and turnips. Several months later we bought a cow and had our own milk and butter. The second year we raised hogs and chickens. We did all our plowing with a yoke of oxen.

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Charley Grant had filed on a claim one mile west of our place.

A man named Ed Belden worked for him. He always wanted Mr. Grant's place. One day Mr. Grant was missing. It was supposed he had gone away. Several weeks later Mr. Belden was seen wearing Mr. Grant's clothes and driving his team. Investigation started and Mr. Grant was found buried under a pile of barnyard refuse. He had been shot. Of course Mr. Belden was apprehended and was sent to prison.

In 1890, Father and I sold our remaining yoke of oxen for \$100.00. We took that money and went to the northern part of Oklahoma and bought quite a few Indian ponies. We drove them to Arkansas and traded them for cattle.

From then on, we bought and sold cattle as a business. We drove our cattle over the Old Chisholm Trail. The country was under Martial law until Statehood, in 1907.

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While Father and I attended to our cattle business my younger brothers did the farming. They raised oats, wheat and broomcorn. In 1895 there was a terrible drouth. No one raised a thing that year.

Because I had not filed on my claim, I was entitled to make the run at the Cheyenne and Arapaho opening. I made the trip, but was too late to stake a claim. The Cherokee Strip was opened in 1893, so I decided to try for that. I rode thirteen miles on horse-back in forty minutes but I had no luck there. Then I made the run at the Sac and Fox opening, but had no luck. When the Kickapoo reservation was opened, I thought I would try once more but I selected some land so lost out again.

When we first came here in 1889 we traveled over an old Sac and Fox Indian Trail.

John Carter carried mail from the railroad to various inland towns. This was called the Star Mail Route.

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He rode horseback in winter, and drove a buckboard in summer.

A stage stand was located at Okmulgee, the halfway station between Muskogee and the Sac and Fox Agency.

My mother did all her own spinning and weaving. She made all the cloth for our clothes.

I remember well the day Carrie Nation came to Edmond with her hatchet to demolish the saloons.

I witnessed quite a few Indian Stomp dances. They were the Stomp dances of the Shawnee, Sac and Fox Indians.

We were driving cattle about three miles east of Wellston when some bones fell out of a tree on us. On investigating we found several skeletons of Indians. We were told the Iowa Tribe always placed their dead on scaffolds in the tree tops.

My grandfather, Mr. Enoch Langford, came over the "Trail of Tears" from North Carolina with some Indians in 1836.