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Sapulpa
Railroads--St. Louis and San Francisco

5368

Field Worker: Dawes Fife
April 16, 1937

Interview with Frank Smith, age 61
Pioneer, living on
Jackson Street,
Sapulpa, Oklahoma.

EARLY DAYS IN SAPULPA.

Frank Smith was born in Madison County, Moro, Illinois, in 1876. He moved from Illinois to Kansas in 1886; stayed there three years, then moved to Vinita in 1889. They came from Kansas to Vinita in a covered wagon. His parents, William and Polly Smith, and his four brothers and one sister all came together. In 1890 they moved to Sapulpa by wagon. When they first came to Sapulpa there was a store owned by Robert Nate and Mr. Wallace, who later sold to H. C. Hall. This store was located two blocks north east of the present Frisco freight depot.

The Smiths built a frame hotel north of the old Western State building. Their hotel was the second building erected in Sapulpa. They also had a livery barn located on the present site of Sapulpa Feed Store, on North Main Street.

Jim Meniffee and F. H. France owned the second store in Sapulpa. Mr. Meniffee bought Mr. France's part of the store. Mr. France later built a hotel called The France Hotel, which is still standing on East Robson Street.

Mr. John L. Bagnall had the third store. C. Williams had the fourth store. Mr. [unclear] had the fifth store. All merchants sold groceries and dry goods and had a few ready made dresses. Lots of calico material was sold then. Mr. Smith says everyone did their own sewing on sewing machines in those days.

The first school was taught by Cassie Meadows in 1894 and 1895, and later ~~in 1896~~ Sina Sussett was the teacher, the school being held in William Smith's livery barn.

The Frisco Railroad was extended from Red Fork to Sapulpa in 1893. The track was laid 200 yards west of the Frisco freight depot. It made a Y turn to face it back toward Red Fork. The train had to be backed as far back as the Sapulpa Laundry on Water Street. The train went back on the main track toward Red Fork by the old Y. M. C. A. building. The train only came

once a day; the train itself had only one passenger coach. The crew consisted of two brakemen, one fireman, one engineer, one conductor, and one mail clerk. In 1898 the Frisco line was extended to Oklahoma City.

Mr. Smith and his father hauled freight in a wagon from Sapulpa to Sacred Fox Agency for two years. When William Smith came to Sapulpa he had a contract to carry both mail and freight to Sac and Fox Agency. The contract was not satisfactory, so he tore it up and then carried freight only, in 1891 and 1892.

He went in the hotel business instead of mail carrier.

He was also transfer man around here, and sold water, getting it from Rock Creek, selling it for 25¢ a barrel.

Mr. Smith has lived in the same place since 1902. His house is part of the old Smith Hotel, erected in 1891.

Mr. Smith knew Cherokee Bill, Bill Cook, Jim Cook, Curtis Deason, Harry Munson, and Lonnie Garden. All of them stayed at the Smith Hotel and worked around the hotel, washing dishes and other jobs. The following year they became outlaws.