

PURDUM, PERRY V.

INTERVIEW.

#6577

316

317

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Alene D. McDowellThis report made on (date) June 28, 1937 19371. Name Perry V. Purdum2. Post Office Address Box 502, Dewey, Oklahoma3. Residence address (or location) Dewey, Oklahoma4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 28 Year 18765. Place of birth Macomb, Illinois6. Name of Father Francis M Purdum Place of birth IllinoisOther information about father buried at Macomb, Illinois7. Name of Mother Ellen Cox-Purdum Place of birth IllinoisOther information about mother Buried in Illinois

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 6.

PURDUM, PERRY V. INTERVIEW.
Alene D. McDowell
Research Field Worker
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
June 28, 1937

318

Interview with
Perry V. Purdum
Box 502
Dewey, Oklahoma

Perry V. Purdum was born March 28, 1876, at Macomb, Illinois.

Father - Francis M. Purdum was born in Schuyler County, Illinois, and died at the age of 80 years. He is buried in Macomb, Illinois.

Mother - Ellen Cox-Purdum was born in Schuyler County, Illinois, and died at the age of 46 years and is buried in Illinois.

I came to the Indian Territory in 1899 to work on the Santa Fe railroad, between Caney, Kansas, and Bartlesville, Indian Territory. Jake Bartles had started to build the railroad and the road bed was built as far as Collinsville, when the Santa Fe railroad company purchased the road bed.

I was working for the Shutt Improvement Company at Twin Lakes, Colorado when they contracted four miles grading on this road from Mr. Bartles. Pearl Llewellyn was foreman for the Shutt Improvement Company and was the best

horseman I ever saw. I shipped out with their outfit for the Indian Territory and we camped on Brush creek, south of Copan for three months. I was assistant cook and teamster.

One morning about four o'clock, the cook and I were in the cooktent preparing breakfast, when I heard the cook say something. He spoke several different languages and when I did not understand him, I thought nothing of it. I did not see or hear anything until I heard him say, "vamoose" and saw him hit someone at the same time. I ran to the door and saw a man lying outside the tent and two others disappearing around the corner. There was a hatchet lying on the ground beside the man. The hatchet belonged to the cook and had been missing for two or three days; we used it to split kindling. After the excitement the cook told me when he discovered the man, he had the hatchet drawn, and he hit his assailant, knocking him through the door. We never knew if they were drunk or were trying

to rob us, for they escaped in the darkness.

One Sunday morning while we were camped on Brush creek, a crew of cowboys drove about 300 head of cattle up to the ford when they discovered the creek was up. They were in a hurry and swam them across. The cattle pawed down the north bank until the last few could not climb it. The cowboys roped three or four, that were down, tied the rope to the saddle horn and pulled them out. This was my first experience in witnessing the cowboys at work.

The chuck wagon, belonging to the outfit was stuck on the north bank and Mr. Llewellyn pulled it out with four head of horses.

After we finished the railroad grade, I returned to Colorado with the outfit. In 1901 I returned to the Indian Territory and my oldest sister, my father and I registered for the run into the Caddo country, but I was too young to hold a claim and we did not make the run.

I then settled in Kay County, at Braman, located about ten miles north of Blackwell. I

helped pipe the first gas into Braman and built the stone meter house, for the Blackwell Oil and Gas Company. In 1908 I was elected mayor of Braman and served this office for two years. I lived in Braman and Blackwell for sixteen years.

FISH STORY.

This is a fishy, fish story, but I swear it is true.

A little creek emptied into the Whikaskia river, six miles north and one mile west of Blackwell on Ed Giger's place. The river was up and had backed the creek out of its banks. Giger raised thoroughbred hogs and when he saw a large black object in the creek, he thought it was one of his hogs. Upon investigation he found it to be a big fish and telephoned for help. Jack Keizer, a great fisherman, lived near and when Ed called, he rushed over in his wagon with a seine. There was no law against tramble nets and seines then. They caught five fish, ranging from 135 to 165 pounds each. The "catch" was brought into Braman and displayed in Bibler's Grocery store window.

until the next day. Keizer owned a claim at the edge of Braman and the west fence was along the east side of town. The five fish heads were displayed on the fence posts for three or four years. Thousands of people saw them. This was in about 1905.

In 1910 I was working through the harvest, for a family named White, shocking wheat. Mrs. White had undergone an operation two years before at the Purdue Hospital, located at Wichita or Wellington, Kansas, I do not remember which town. I arrived at the house one day at noon, a few minutes before Mr. White, and Mrs. White complained of a pain in her side. I stayed at the house until Mr. White arrived and put the dinner on the table. Mrs. White felt a sharp object, like a pin in her side and when the doctor arrived, he discovered a pair of scissors had been left inside and was working out. She returned to the hospital and Dr. Purdue operated and removed them. This worried Dr. Purdue until he had a nervous breakdown, causing his death.

I built a mantle and book case of walnut lumber, from the old Bartles mill, in the James Chance home at Dewey, and a mantle of walnut from the old Turner store of Bartlesville, in the Harry Stead home at Dewey.

My father and I followed the carpenter trade for many years in the Indian Territory and Montgomery County, Kansas. My father built seventeen houses in one block at Independence, Kansas.

I have a scar on my head where Joe Taylor hit me with a gun in a fight, in the early days. It cost him his gun, horse and saddle to clear himself. Joe claimed to be a cousin to Frank and Jesse James, but everybody doubted it.

I have lived in Dewey since 1918 and followed the carpenter trade in Dewey and Bartlesville.