

SMITH, MAUD WATTS.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Maude M. Fink,

This report made on (date) June 25 1937

1. Name Mrs. Maud Watts Smith,

2. Post Office Address Arpaho, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Arpaho, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month April Day 21 Year 1872

5. Place of birth Near Havensville, Kansas

6. Name of Father Joseph Watts, Place of birth England

Other information about father Farmer

7. Name of Mother Lucy Shoves Place of birth England

Other information about mother Housewife

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

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Maude M. Fink,
Field Worker,
June 25, 1937.

An Interview with Mrs. Maud Watts Smith,
Arapaho, Oklahoma.

They built a courthouse in Arapaho and it burned; they built another one and later sold it to a private individual and later it also burned. They built a two-story house at Arapaho, then when they built the new courthouse they tore the old courthouse down and built a community house out of it.

The first couple who were married in Arapaho were Frank Dyer and Emma Cakely. Last week their son came back with a girl from Enid to get married. He said, that he wanted to get married in the same place where his father and mother had been married.

Jim Shepherd lives on the place where Glover was shot by the outlaw, Red Buck, who was the meanest one of the killers; he would kill a man just for the fun of killing.

"Hook" Miller was in reality George Miller. He got his hand shot off and had to use a hook for a hand. Afterwards he went by the name of "Hook" Miller. An Indian killed him and a United States Marshal down at Sand Springs.

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The "laws" found a man dead one time and they searched him and he had \$40.00 on him. They thought he killed himself. It was against the law to commit suicide so they fined him \$40.00.

El Reno was the nearest railroad, and the hack changed horses twice. They had a relay station where they changed horses and they worked two horses to a hack.

There were no bridges, people would ford the creeks and rivers. They would drive through to El Reno in a day. They had school in an old mill, the roof of which caught on fire one day. Then they had school in the church house. Then they built another schoolhouse and later it was moved to town and made into a hotel and later it burned.

Arapaho was the main trading point and nineteen hundred people lived there until Clinton began to build up and people moved down there. People lived in dugouts or half dugouts and some lived in houses with two rooms and a hall between.

Mrs. Smith filed in 1893. The people could not be away from their claim longer than six months. Mrs. Smith would teach school in Kansas then would come down here and stay on

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her claim. Mrs. Smith's brother was County Treasurer and Mrs. Smith helped him. She worked in the courthouse for over twenty years.

During a flood of July 6, Turkey Creek got "up" until it was just like a river. It washed houses away, drowned eight people, forty head of hogs, and the hail was so large that it killed several head of stock. All of the east side of the church was knocked out by hail stones. P. H. Gillion with his brother-in-law, P. H. Bailey, felt their house washing away, so they cut a hole in the floor and sank the house in three feet of water to keep it from washing away.

They hauled their lumber from El Reno for the building of the schoolhouse which was a half dugout and Bess Watts was the teacher. The seats were logs laid down with planks put across them for seats; they did not have any desk and the children used slates and pencils. There was a fireplace in each end of the dugout. They burned wood in the rural districts and in town they burned coal. One teacher taught all grades from the primary on up.

In the early days there was a fire at Arapaho and all

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the houses except three on the north side of the street were burned.

Mrs. Smith's brother had a hardware store at Arapaho. He wrote back to his three sisters and said that this was a fine country and asked them to come out. It took two days for them to come on the train and a day to come from El Reno.

They had to haul their drinking water from Arapaho, which was a mile away from their claim but the water which was used for washing clothes and dishes was gotten out of the creek that ran through their place. This creek did not have a bridge over it, they crossed it on stones, and when it was "up" they had to wait until it run down to get across.

The ground was new and they raised a good yield of everything that they planted. The people were awful poor and they ate just what they could get. The people did not have any windows in their dugout because they did not have the money to pay for them.

There was plenty of sand plums, wild currants, pie melons and wild grapes and there were fish in all the creeks.

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There was a fish caught out of the Washita River close to Clinton that weighed eighty pounds. The Washita River has filled up a third since the people have begun to plow the land. This is the reason there are so many floods. The school land was purchased through the state and every sixteenth and thirty-sixth section was set aside for school land.