

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

361

4368

Field Worker's name Ruth Lee HamblinReport made on (date) June 9 1937 193Name Mrs. Ruth SmithenPost Office Address Frederick OklaResidence address (or location) Nt 13 StDATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 1 Year 1888Place of birth Wise County TexasName of Father Mr. Tom Walker Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

Name of Mother Elsie Walker Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

See 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 1.

Ruth Gamblin,
Field Worker.
6/9/37.

362

An Interview With Mrs. Ruth Smithen,
Frederick, Oklahoma.

PIONEER DAYS IN EASTERN OKLAHOMA.

I was born February 1, 1888, in Wise County, Texas,
to Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Walker. We lived in Texas until
1894 then moved to Indian Territory in Jefferson County.

We came to the Territory in two covered wagons.

My father and mother drove one wagon and we children (7)
drove the other. We brought all our furniture consisting
of two beds, a stove and five chairs, table, chuck box,
and a few dishes. My father had made most of the furni-
ture we had.

We crossed the river on a ferry boat which was pull-
ed by a cable, which broke with us and sent the boat two
miles down the river. It took them two days to get us
out of the river. Even though I was just a child at that
time, I shall never forget how frightened I was. It also
cost us \$1.00 to cross the river, which seemed very high
at that time.

As I said, we were two days crossing the river and
really did not know where we would locate when we arriv-
ed in the Indian Territory.

We stopped at a little town by the name of Ryan and
my father rented a farm twenty-five miles from that place

whose name from an Indian, I don't remember. We very seldom saw this Indian. My father had to pay third and fourth rent.

The farm consisted of ninety acres, however only sixty acres were in cultivation. The farm had very rich soil. We bought corn at fifteen cents a bushel. We raised everything in the way of vegetables. The first year my father raised cotton, it was planted by hand. My father laid off the rows and we children planted it by hand, then father covered it with a barrel which was weighted down. That year we made a bale to the acre and received six and seven cents for it.

Our house was a three room house. We also had a half-dugout. The house had plank floors but the dugout had a solid rock floor. We had a big open fireplace in the dugout and so we used this for the kitchen. The rock floor was real warm in the winter and cool in the summer.

My oldest sister Mary organized a school and taught in our home. As I said, we had three rooms so she used one room for a class room. She had twenty pupils, each paying tuition of \$1.00 a month. This was the only school in our neighborhood.

We also organized a church in our home, of the Baptist denomination, it was named the Price Church as the minister's

name was Price. He lived just across the river in Texas. He came over once a month and would preach Saturday night and Sunday all day. The members could not afford to pay him a salary but they paid him with meat, potatoes or anything they might have. So the first school and church was organized in our house. There was a little store just five miles from us but the nearest town, Ryan was, as before said, twenty miles from our home.

We tried to raise chickens but did not have much success as the wild turkeys fought them, and the deer tried to eat up our garden the first year. We raised cattle and hogs, as feed was so cheap.

We lived on this farm nineteen years. I then married Bob Smithen, one of our neighbor boys, and moved to Chickasha and lived until my husband past away in 1934. I now make my home with my son, who lives in Frederick, but my real home will always be in Jefferson County because that was where I was reared and where I spent many happy days.