

SPURGEON, T. F. (DR.) INTERVIEW #4150

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BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

SPURGEON, T. F. (DR.)

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Field Worker's name Ruth Lee Gamblin.

This report made on (date) May 18, 1937.

1. Name Dr. T. F. Spurgeon.

2. Post office Address North 10th Street,

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

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

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 4.

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Ruth Lee Gamblin,
Field Worker,
May 18, 1937.

An Interview With Dr. T. F. Spurgeon,
North 10th Street, Frederick, Okla.

On February 13, 1903, I moved my family to Frederick from Coyle. They came by the way on Guthrie to Fort Worth, Texas, then on to Vernon, Texas. I came ahead of them on an immigrant car which stopped at the end of the Frisco line in the sand hills south of Davidson. I sold my home in Coyle and bought a supply of groceries to start a grocery store.

I had the groceries together with the household supplies on the car with me so I unloaded them and sent my wife over to secure wagons to move us. She made the trip across the river in a buggy and as she had the description of our land she went to it. I had built a two room house which had a dirt floor. My wife hired two neighbors to come after me the next day in wagons.

I established the store in my home and sold groceries and later I made it into a general merchandise store. We also established a post office with the store. It was one of the three Star Routes of Frederick. Our first rural telephone was established in 1903-1904 .

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The duties of my wife in those busy pioneer days were to assist in all work in which I was interested, and to perform necessary home duties such as cooking, washing and ironing. She also kept house, cared for the children, managed the store and post office but she always found pleasure in Sunday School and church work.

As I was a doctor and had all the practice I could take care of she sometimes had to go with me and as we did not have highways, I had to use a horse and buggy and had to cross the prairie land using North, South, East, and West as guides to patients' homes and often late at night I was guided on my return home by the flickering light of a lantern hung high on the gable of the house by my wife.

Those were trying days as there were many hardships to go up against. We lived in two rooms at first and also had our store in them. Many a night my wife would have to run the coyotes away from the house, also the neighbors' cattle. But any way the little store grew under our management until it was worth \$5,000.00 and I also had a good practice, for which my collections were good, in fact, they were much better in those days than you would think. I sold my store

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in 1907 and moved to Frederick in 1914 where I have lived ever since.

I bought the first car in Tillman County in 1907. It was a Ford roadster without windshield, top or fenders. I bought it from Oklahoma Ford Motor Company of Oklahoma City, at that time the nearest agency.

When it arrived it was a curiosity and a swarm of citizens were on hand to see it and I did not have to pay any one to help me unload it. The tires were very inferior but were in keeping with the car which cost \$765.00. It was the first automobile I had ever seen but I managed to drive it to my farm two miles north and four west of Frederick but not knowing there was more than one shift I drove it in low gear all the way.

There was no automobile mechanic in Frederick for a year or more so I had to be my own mechanic. I kept the car two years when I traded it for some lots at 720 North 10th Street where I now reside.

About two weeks after getting this car, Seth Barrett, then a farmer and ginner bought a two-cylinder Moline. Because of the prejudice of many people against automobiles,

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because they scared the horses, it required some courage to drive a car in those days.

Many people did not think an automobile was entitled to any part of the road and they had to be gradually educated before they changed their minds.

Although it was the last word in transportation the first car was a wobbly sort of affair with no stability and there was very little assurance that once started in it you would reach your destination.