

SPEER, FRANK W.

INTERVIEW

#4276

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

Field Worker's name Ethel E. Palmer.

This report made on (date) May 31, 1937. 1937

1. Name Frank W. Speer.

2. Post Office Address Leedey, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

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

5. Place of birth Jacksboro Texas.

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father He was a doctor. Buried at Trail, Okla.

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.

Ethel Palmer,
Field Worker.

An Interview With Frank W. Sperr.
Leedey, Oklahoma.

I was born in Texas, in 1861; came to Oklahoma in 1884. I took up a sooner claim down by what is now Foss, Oklahoma. The sooners had come in there and taken up this land, but when I came there wasn't anyone living on the place. I only lived there eight months.

First I started to build me a dugout, when a cow man by the name of Louis Williams came by (cow men were sooners who had only cattle) and asked me why I didn't build a cow pen instead of the dugout. I replied that I had no use for a cow pen, I didn't even have one cow, and the cowman said, "Why, there's a whole pasture of them, just help yourself and if there isn't plenty come over to the house and there are several more."

"I'm telling you, had it not been for the cow men, there wouldn't have been any Oklahoma. Many a time when they butchered they would bring me a whole quarter of beef.

Then, I moved to where I am now living, I lived here two years before I filed, my place being in section 8, Township 16, Range 19. Here also I dug a dugout, with a dirt floor, and a dirt top. We had furniture, but very

-2-

little. We drove posts down in ground (floor) and laid side boards on top of them for our bed, and did the same way for our table. We had lots of barb wire in those days, and we took those spools that the wire was wrapped on and used them for our chairs. I had four children, my wife and myself to support. I lived good. In about two years, I made us a cedar log building, over the dugout. I am now living in this same building and dugout. This log house has been here forty years.

I would go to El Reno to buy our supply of food, one hundred and twenty-five miles. It was a very small town then, and we went twice a year. Beef was our principal food in those days. We raised our cattle, and butchered some of them. We had fish also, not too many though.

People were terrible about stealing our cattle those days and we had to guard our stock at night. If this wasn't done, we were apt to lose all our cows and stock. Redbuck, Miller and Glover were in a bunch stealing cows, and they would even kill the cows.

-3-

Redbuck and Miller thought Glover had betrayed them, so they killed him. The officers tried to arrest them, and finally killed Redbuck, and shot Miller's arm off. They took him to the hospital and he was a long time getting over the injury. When he did get over it, they turned him loose, saying he had had his punishment.

Once a United States Marshal came out after a whole bunch of us boys. They claimed we were keeping the country from settling up, so they carried us to Alva for trial. However, they never did put us in jail; friends went bond and we came clear.

We would go ten miles in a wagon to a dance, and sometimes we would dance all night, starting home by daylight the next morning.

I gave a big barbeque one day, there were people from all around here, and there was a lady who had a camera. I told her to take our picture; that we old boys might never be all together again. I still have that old picture.

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- 4 -

To cook our meat we would dig a pit and put two poles across the pit, then wire across those poles, then put our beef on that. We did not build a fire under this beef, we just kept live coals of fire under it. We would put a vinegar rag and salt over this meat, and cook it about eighteen hours.

I have an old razor, which is two hundred and seventy-three years old. It was made in 1694. I brought this to Oklahoma with me.

I failed to mention why I settled in this place. I wanted the good grass, I liked the location and timber. About thirty years ago a Colorado dam burst and caused about sixty acres of my good land to wash away; and I don't know how many big trees I lost.

I was married to Bell McGlothen in 1884, in Texas.