

SPARKS, IDA

INTERVIEW

#8788

25

BIOGRAPHIC FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Planter History Project for Oklahoma

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

Field Worker's name Maurice R. Anderson.

This report made on (date) September 28, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Ida Sparks,

2. Post Office Address Maysville, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: nth September Day 18 Year 1867

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father G. W. Randolph Place of birth Arkansas.

Other information about father deceased.

7. Name of Mother Ollie Friend Place of birth Texas

Other information about mother deceased.

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 Six

SPARKS, IDA.

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Maurice R. Anderson,
Interviewer.
September 28, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Ida Sparks,
Maysville, Oklahoma.

I was born in 1867 in Texas and came to the Indian Territory with my father and mother in 1873. We were living in Texas and a group of farmers living there all got together and organized a wagon train and started for the Indian Territory.

I was six years old, but I can remember about the trip and about our settling in the new country.

There were several families in the party; Coffee Randolph and family, Tommie Shannon, Joe Myers, Lyman Friend, Sam Friend, Austin Hart and my father, G. W. Randolph.

My uncle, W. C. Randolph, had been in this country long before my father came here and he had married a Chickasaw Indian girl and this made him a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation, which gave him a right to all the land he wanted to fence; so the wagon train was headed

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

2

for my uncle's place about three miles northeast of where Maysville, Oklahoma, is now.

This wagon train was well organized before it started; each man was appointed to do a certain job, the wagons were pulled by oxen although there were a few mule teams.

My father and another man were elected to drive the hogs and two more of the men to drive the cattle. Each farmer who owned cattle and hogs had his mark and brand on them and all the cattle were put into one herd and the hogs in another.

Driving the hogs was a slow job but each night by the time the women folks had supper ready my father and the other man would be there with the bunch of hogs.

I remember after many days of traveling we reached the place where we settled; we had tents with us and lived in tents until the men got log houses built and as soon as a log house was built a family would move in.

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

3

As soon as a house was put up the men would write all their names on cards and put them into a hat and the man who drew his name out of the hat would move into the house.

The first houses had dirt floors and were covered with oak boards made by hand. While some of the men were cutting logs others were making boards. All the houses were put up not far apart. This was done because the Western Indians were making raids through this country.

This community was called the Randolph Community.

As soon as the houses were put up the men started to fence the farms with rail fences and the members of each family, after the houses and farms were fenced, took their own hogs and cattle and started farming for themselves but they all had to pay rent to my uncle, W. C. Randolph.

We didn't have a schoolhouse for several years and the only education we children got was home study but

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

4

in a few years there was built a log schoolhouse for the Randolph Community. The men living in this community hired a teacher and gave the teacher free board.

One family would board the teacher for a while and another family would do the same so in that way they all helped take care of the teacher.

I don't remember how much they paid the school teacher but each man paid a certain amount each month.

There was a big brush arbor built at this schoolhouse and during the summer months that was where we had church and in the winter church was held in the schoolhouse. In those days we only had church on Sunday.

At that time Miller and Green's store at Pauls Valley was where my father received his mail.

About twice a year some of the men would take three or four wagons and go to Denison, Texas, for supplies; they bought flour by the barrel and coffee

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

5

by the sack. The coffee would be green and I have seen my mother dry and brown this green coffee; then she had a coffee grinder that was fixed on the side of the wall in which she would grind the coffee.

My father didn't raise cotton in the early days as there was no market for it here; the nearest market was Denison, Texas, but he raised cattle and hogs and corn. I remember we didn't have to chop corn as in that day and time there were no weeds on the cultivated land and the prairie land was knee high in fine prairie grass; in the summer time this prairie country would look like a big wheat field.

We were settled near the Washita River and this was where we got water until a big spring was located near the Randolph Community. When the time came to market the cattle the men would put their cattle all together and drive them to Kansas to the market and the hogs would be driven to Caddo, Indian Territory, where the nearest railroad was.

SPARKS, IDA.

INTERVIEW.

#8788.

In the early days when the river froze over ice would be cut in big slabs and stored away for summer and there certainly used to be some cold winters. The Washita River would freeze over hard enough so that a wagon and team could cross on the ice.

We had to live in a log house with a dirt floor when we first settled here but in the summer time there would be all kinds of flowers in our front yard and in front of some of these log homes the yards were just as beautiful with flowers as some of the fine homes are today.

I have lived in this country since 1873 and I now live in Maysville.