

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

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

16149

Field Worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt,

This report made on (date) March 1, 1938.

Lone Wolf, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

1. Name Mr. William Henry Mangers,

2. Post Office Address Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Jefferson Street.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 12 Year 1868

5. Place of birth Chickasaw, Indian Nation, near present town of Madill in Marshall County.

6. Name of Father William Henry Mangers place of birth Pennsylvania or Illinois.

* Other information about father A Union Soldier--Civil War.

7. Name of Mother Edie (Duniphin) Mangers place of birth Mississippi

Other information about mother Came with her family to Arkansas, to Texas, then to Indian Territory.

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 2.

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

10149

Ethel B. Tackitt,
Investigator,
March 1, 1938.

An Interview with William Henry Mangers,
Jefferson Street,
Hobart, Kiowa County, Oklahoma.

I was born in the Chickasaw Indian Territory, January 12, 1888, near the place where the town of Madill is now in Marshall County and am of the third generation to carry my name as my father, William Henry Mangers, was named for his father who was also William Henry Mangers.

My mother, Edie Dunipin was born in Mississippi, but when a child moved with her parents to Arkansas, then to Texas and later to the Chickasaw Indian Nation where she married my father.

My father had served through the Civil War as a Union Soldier and after he and Mother were married in the Chickasaw Nation they continued to make that their home.

When I can first remember this part of the country it was in the wild. The few white settlers who were our neighbors were the families of the Eastwoods, Sackris and Pittendgers who all lived on small cleared farms near the creeks and used water from springs. I do not remember any farms at all on the uplands, neither do I remember any dug wells.

-2-

The timber was tall and the brush thick while the reeds in the lowlands grew like those in a jungle and on the higher lands the grass grew abundantly. There were walnuts and pecans as well as plums and many other kinds of nuts and fruits growing in the woods.

The houses were all built of logs with clapboard roofs and puncheon floors. The cooking was done on the hearth before the fireplace in iron pots and skillets with a big iron lid, iron frying pans and kettles for coffee. There were hooks and rods placed across the fireplace on which to hang these pots while boiling food and the hearth was of stones large and flat so that the coals could be raked out on it to do the baking in the Dutch oven, skillet and lid.

I was ten years old when Father bought our first cooking stove. It was an iron, wood stove and the first I ever saw. Everything like that had to be hauled from Texas.

We, as well as our neighbors, raised everything we ate except sugar and coffee and much of the sweetening was done with sorghum molasses and the sugar which settled in the bottom of the wooden barrels where it was kept.

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

10149

-3-

There were no railroads, neither were there any worked dirt roads, except as they were dug down in order to get from one farm to another.

We grew some wheat and one of us cut it by hand with a cradle and another person walked behind the cradle and picked up the wheat in one arm and with the other hand, wrapped a wisp of straw around the bundle. I have done this many a day. Our first grain threshing was done by taking these bundles to a clean place on the ground which had been packed hard for the purpose and piling it loosely over the ground, then bringing our cattle and horses and driving them around and around over the straw until the grain was trampled out when it was carefully scooped up and winnowed by pouring it down to drive the chaff away. This driving the cows and horses on the trampled ground and chaffing the wheat was very much my job as a boy.

The next improvement in our threshing methods was made by building a pole pen of right height and easy reach, covering it with poles laid with convenient cracks between them and placing the bundles on this, then taking switches long

-4-

and straight, usually of willow, and switching the straw until the grain was beaten out and fell on a wagon sheet beneath where it was again winnowed for chaff; this was much more satisfactory and became the usual method of threshing. The wheat had to be hauled to Texas for grinding for there were no mills in that part of the country. When the trip was made a number of men went along together for safety and in order to be of assistance to one another, we had nothing but ox teams and these with our neighbors' oxen would go in trains of ten and fifteen wagons, working from three to six yokes of oxen. Some men worked many more oxen; some worked as many as fourteen yoke of oxen and eight and ten wagons, but those were mostly regular freighters and bone and hide haulers in the West.

The flour, shorts and bran were brought home and used with great frugality. But we usually had biscuits for breakfast on Sunday morning and they were fine baked in the skillet and lid on the hearth.

We plowed with oxen and planted all our grain by hand. I can remember my mother walking down the corn and cotton rows

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

10-149

-5-

dropping seed for Father before we children were big enough to help. The cotton also had to be hauled to Denison, Sherman or to Gainesville, Texas, to be ginned for many years and all clothing which was not made at home was bought at Gainesville on these trips.

The first doctor whom I remember was Dr. Norton, who rode a buckskin colored pony; he owned two of these ponies and carried his pill-bags behind his saddle. He traveled over a radius of forty miles and I remember one time it took so long for him to reach his patient that he found that the patient had been dead some time when he got to the home.

The first school I remember was taught by a Civil War veteran in a one-room cottonwood lumber house. His name was Clay. They had expected to put a puncheon floor in this house but never did get to it, so we sat on the sleepers for seats and they were not comfortable. It was a subscription school and did not last long. My next school was taught by a woman named Holman and it was in a regular dugout which was much more comfortable. We were taught nothing but Webster's Blue-back Spelling Book. Children did not attend school

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

10149

-6-

regularly in those days for many reasons. They had to walk a long distance over wild country filled with cattle and varmints, also storms, rain and cold were to be considered and many people did not think that it was necessary that a person should know anything more than to read, write and figure a little. Therefore many children only went to school when they wanted to do so.

I grew to manhood in this country and have witnessed the changes which have taken place. Our schoolhouses or dugouts were used as church houses and for all public gatherings.

There was a friend of ours who had a cow ranch on Wild-horse Creek which flows into the Washita River, in what is now Garvin County. This man had a brother who lived in one of the eastern states who came out to visit him on his ranch. While there with his brother and three other men he went out hunting and was gone most all day. In the evening they all started in to the ranch and when the four reached the house the visiting brother was not there. They soon heard a shot in the woods nearby and waited thinking that he would soon come on in, but he did not, so they went back to see what

MANGERS, WILLIAM HENRY

INTERVIEW

10149

-7-

he was doing and found that he had shot and wounded a cougar, which had attacked and had killed him and was yet upon his body. They killed the cougar but this man was dead.

People had to know how to protect themselves in those days. I have never lived in any other state but Oklahoma and have done my best to build for the good of my people and state. I see the progress we have made but feel that we yet have far to go. I remember when mines and oil wells were things unheard of.