

### **Notice of Copyright**

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

### **Citing Resources from the Western History Collections**

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW

9194

327

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

328

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

Field Worker's name Ida A. Merwin.

This report made on (date) November 13, 1937. 1937

1. Name A. M. Capers.

2. Post Office Address Route #4, Perry, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month December Day 4 Year 1866.

5. Place of birth Baltimore, Maryland.

6. Name of Father Robert Capers. Place of birth Maine, buried near Guthrie, Oklahoma.

Other information about father Civil War Veteran.

7. Name of Mother Earlyne Fortson Capers. Place of birth Maryland.

Other information about mother Buried near Guthrie, Oklahoma.

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

Ida A. Merwin,  
Investigator,  
Nov. 13, 1937.

An Interview With A. M. Capers,  
Route #4, Perry, Oklahoma.  
Negro.

I was born at Baltimore, Maryland, December 4, 1866, the son of Robert and Earlyne Fortson Capers. In August, 1893, I came from Waco, Texas, on horseback, arriving in Guthrie, Oklahoma Territory on August 7th. I was very anxious to secure a home in the new country, and wanted to enter the race in the opening of the Cherokee Strip.

My parents had come to Oklahoma in 1889 and located in Guthrie. I stayed with them a few weeks and about September 10, my brother and I went to Orlando to await the opening.

On Saturday, September 16, I entered the line on the south, starting at a point near Orlando. We made the race on horseback and I staked land on the NE<sub>2</sub> of Section 19-20 1 W which I still own and on which is my home. My brother staked land near, but he had a grocery store in Guthrie, and felt he had better return to the business there, and he never filed. The land I staked was contested, and it

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

took nine years to settle this. I secured for my attorney ex-Governor C. M. Barnes and I was successful in winning the contest. During the time of this contest I was charged with being a "Sooner", but on the date they claimed I had entered the Public Domain, I was in Texas, and it happened to be the day I bought my pony at a "trade sale" at Waco, Texas, and I secured affidavits from court officers which cleared me of the charge.

The day of the run, which was Saturday, after locating, my brother and I began to gather rocks to make a place to camp. We laid these rocks in two walls a few feet apart, and used our saddle blankets for a roof, we had to crawl in this as it was not tall enough for us to stand up, but we slept in this that night, using our saddles for pillows.

The next morning we went to the starting point near Orlando and got our belongings, with which to make us a camp, but we continued to sleep in the rock shelter until we could build a house. We cut logs and laid them together for walls and hewed shingles, or clapboards from logs for a roof, making one room 14 x 16, which did not have a floor, and we had this done Wednesday, September 20th. This was

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

-3-

the first house in this community and many people took shelter here until they could build. Several white people stayed here, white and colored all shared alike and helped each other.

Soon after locating I made a dugout and this with the log house was my home for twelve years, and when I married Mother gave me a small frame house she had in Guthrie. This I moved to the farm and made in shape for a home, in which we lived until about 1922, when I built the house as it is today.

There were two good springs on this land and I located near one, from which we used water until a well was dug. One of the springs is in good shape yet and furnishes a good supply of water.

For fuel I used wood which was cut from timber on this land.

My first furniture was home-made, and my cooking was done in a fireplace, using a dutch oven for baking my bread. I still have this oven.

I secured most of my supplies from Orlando. Sometimes when I was hauling to Perry or Guthrie, I would get

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

-4-

things there, but in those days we didn't need much. I ground kaffir or corn for meal, raised some cane, which we had made into sorghum also made syrup from melons, There was a lot of game, such as rabbits, quail, possums and coons, which I killed and used for meats, and often times I made hominy from corn.

I had a hen and two chicks given to me and from these I got a start of poultry. Later when I had eggs to carry to market I only got five cents a dozen and I have known of them to be lower than that.

The first year I hired about fifteen acres of sod broke and I planted the crop of kaffir, melons, and cotton by hand, using a spade to chop the overturned sod.

I brought with me from Texas a two year old pony besides the one I rode, and also had two saddles. I had saved some money with which I bought another pony and this with one saddle I traded for a cow, calf and two young steers.

A Mr. W. A. Clinkinbeard, a white man, had some young steers or oxen and we broke his team and mine to work. He and I worked together and helped each other with

CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

-5-

our work for several years. We used these ox teams for breaking sod, breaking many an acre for others, and this gave us money for our other needs. We also used these teams to haul crops to market to Perry and Guthrie, taking two days to make the trip. My pony team was used for cultivating and the lighter work. I did some work in Guthrie, and for others in the community, and got fifty cents a day.

Our first school was built by donation, the county furnishing the material. It was for whites and colored children. This was located where the Vernon School, District 77 is now. Later a separate school was built for whites, and this was retained for the colored children, and is used for same now. I have served as chairman of the board for fourteen years.

I was elected Justice of Peace in 1895 and am still holding that office.

I have raised four children and two of them are school teachers. My farm is located near the oil fields in the southwest part of Noble County, and I am getting good lease money on it.



CAPERS, A. M.

INTERVIEW.

9194.

-6-

In settling the contest I found my best help came from the white people. The white people in this community have been friendly and we have worked together and been neighbors.