

MAPLES, W. S.

INTERVIEW

#4329

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Ethel D. Pfeiffer
Field Worker
June 5, 1937

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Interview with Mrs. W. S. Maples
Duke, Oklahoma. Route#1
Father-Joseph Guess
Mother-Julia Margaret Croley

My parents were born in Georgia. They reared a family of six boys and four girls. My four brothers, Jackson, Abram, Henry and Thomas, were all Civil War veterans. Abram died during the war, of pneumonia. My parents died in Texas, Father was sixty-five, and mother was fifty-eight at the time of her death. They were both buried at Omaha, Morris County, Texas.

My Marriage.

I met and married William Starnes Maples at Glen Rose, Texas. We reared four children. We came to Greer County, Texas, on the 5th day of May, 1892. We came here in two covered wagons, and drove a bunch of cattle. We had to ford the rivers; and when we crossed deep Red River, the water ran into the wagon boxes and damaged some of our groceries. Some of the men in our crowd rode horses and went ahead of the wagon to show the way and to see how deep the water was; also to see that we didn't drive into any water holes that had

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quick sand. These were very dangerous to the travelers from the East as they didn't know anything about quick sand.

We saw plenty of deer, wild turkeys and prairie chickens. There were lots of buffalo bones over the prairies, but few lived and were left. This had been a good stock country. The Government sent some inspectors over Western Oklahoma and decided to open it up to settlement. This forced the cattlemen to go out of business, or to go to other states where they could have the open range. This part of the State was then cut up into 160-acre tracts for settlers, and this was open to settlement ~~May~~ 4th, 1896. We saw lots of big herds of cattle when they were rounding them up, and taking them to market. Sometimes they ~~were~~ were a moving mass as far as ~~one~~ could see.

On March 16th, 1896, my husband filed on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9, T-2 North, Range 23 W, located two and one-half miles west of the present town of

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Duke, Oklahoma, which consisted of one general store and Post Office. Our land was only a claim before we filed, and had a one-room house on it.

Water and Fuel Supply

There was a well of gyp water on the place. We used it for stock water, and we had to haul our drinking water from a spring on Turkey Creek, some three miles away. We had a cook stove that we used to cook on and for heating purposes. We burned mesquite grubs.

I remember one year we raised such a big corn crop that we couldn't sell it for enough to buy coal, so we burned the corn for fuel that winter.

School

The neighbors went together and built a one-room school house. They called this "Cottonwood", and it was one and half miles from our house. This was where we sent our children to school, Sunday School, and church. We had big meetings here in the summer time. The school terms were held in the fall and spring to

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avoid the blizzards of the winter. This school district was later consolidated with the Duke District, and the building moved away.

Clothing

When I was a girl I spun and wove the cloth for our clothes, dyed it with the dyes we made from barks and sumac berries. I made the cloth into garments by hand. I continued to make our clothes by hand until 1900, then I bought my first sewing machine. I knitted all the stockings, gloves, capes and caps for my family. We wore shawls with fringe all around them for wraps and always wore flannel underwear in winter. My sister and I knitted for the United States soldier boys during the World War. My sister died since, at the age of ninety years.

Travel

We traveled in wagons, hacks and bug ies in the early days. These were drawn by one or two horses. When we came from Georgia we had two ox wagons and

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a two-horse carriage for the family to ride in, but I have ridden many times in an ox cart, and ox wagon.

Food

We hauled our supplies from Quanaah at first. We made about three or four trips a year. We raised our meat, lard, and from the trimmings I made my own soap with lye. I made lye in an ash-hopper from wood ashes. We made our syrup from sorghum cane. We would haul the cane to the sorghum mill and have it made into syrup. We picked wild plums on the rivers; and we always had plenty of milk and butter; ^{and} ^{too} we had lots of chickens and plenty of eggs. I also raised ducks and made my own feather beds, and pillows.

Indians

The Indians came through the country on several occasions, but I never saw them except in parades. They would be dressed in their very best clothes, with

bright colored shawls, their hair in long braids tied with bright colored strings or ribbons. The men would also have their hair in long braids.

My husband died in 1917, and was buried at Rock Cemetery, three miles north of Duke, Oklahoma. We continued to live on the farm and carry on, as my two daughters are still at home with me. My two sons died many years ago and are also buried in the Rock Cemetery.

I went through so many hardships, that I can't say I enjoyed the pioneer days or life, but I came to get a home, and about the only pleasure I got out of it was the fact that I had a good home. Despite the many, many difficulties that confront a pioneer father and mother, we had the pleasure of seeing our children get a good education. Our two daughters have each taught school, first in the one-room school, then in the Union Graded five or six room schools, and then in the larger, more modern type of school. I have realized a great deal of pleasure out of their success.