

FANNING, F. E.

INTERVIEW

8262

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

Field Worker's name Jasper H. Mead

This report made on (date) August 18 193 7

1. Name F. E. Fanning

2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma Grady County

3. Residence address (or location) 1620 Colorado Avenue

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 6 Year 1858

5. Place of birth Born in State of Texas

6. Name of Father Jim Fanning Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about father Died at the age of 94

7. Name of Mother Sallie Honey Place of birth Tennessee

Other information about mother Died at the age of 65

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 _____.

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Jasper H. Mead, Interviewer
Indian-Pioneer History
August 18, 1937

F. E. Fenning, Chickasha, Oklahoma.
1620 Colorado Avenue.

My name is F. E. Fenning. I was born in the state of Texas, the 6th day of June, 1858.

I came to Oklahoma 50 years ago and the first place I landed was at Willis Ferry. This was a crossing place across Red River and the ferry was named after an Indian named Willis. The Indians who lived here were Choctaws and lived on the North side of the river in the Choctaw Nation.

Thackerville was also located on the north side of the river. It was just a small village with two stores and a blacksmith shop. There was no farming around here, nothing but small patches. All of the land was pasture or ranch land.

Westheimer and Daube were two Jews who owned thousands of acres of land and had thousands of head of cattle.

Bill Washborn and Charley McSwain also were big ranch owners and cattlemen.

The old Chisholm Trail came by Tackerville and I

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have seen from three to five thousand head of cattle in one herd on this old trail coming out of Texas, going to Dodge City, Kansas.

This country was very rocky and hilly and the main water supply came from springs and from clear running streams.

The first few years I was in Oklahoma there was not any such thing as a school building. Most of the young folks were like I was, working on a big ranch and doing what we called working on the frontier and that means on the front line out away from everybody else.

Ardmore was the closest town and the closest railroad was at Ardmore and that was the Santa Fe. It was built there a few years after I came to Oklahoma.

One time when I was herding cattle, the Indians attacked me and my buddy; we managed to get away but they killed my dog. I pulled two arrows out of him; he was a good stock dog; then the Indians went about two miles from where we were and killed two children of Mrs. Williams. She was out in the cow-lot milking when the

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Indians killed her children.

I have seen wild mustang horses in herds, hundreds together.

I have also seen herds of deer and antelope, the deer used to bed down with the cattle; we could jump a deer out of the herd of cattle and it was very easy to shoot him because we could get right up on him.

The ranch work in those days paid \$25.00 per month with everything furnished; the boss even furnished our clothes and when we needed more clothes all we did was to see the boss and he would unlock the store room and fix us up with anything we needed. All of our coffee was bought green and we parched it ourselves.

Lofer wolves used to go in packs; there is not a dog in town that is as big as these wolves were, and lots of times we would have to get up in the night and chase these wolves away from the cattle. Two or three of them would kill a full grown fat steer if some cowboy was not there to stop it.

The kind of houses we lived in were half dugouts.

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I worked on one ranch where we lived in what we called a picket house; the logs were split and we stood them up instead of laying them lengthwise. Then we would take another split log to cover up the cracks. The top was covered with pecan boards that we cut out down on the river.

About four hundred yards from this house was a turkey roost, and there were so many wild turkeys roosting there that I have seen them break limbs as big around as a man's wrist off of the trees.

The first barbed wire fence I ever saw was made out of flat tin with barbs on each side; that was a long time ago.

One time I killed five wild turkeys at one shot, right where Sulphur Springs is now. That was at the main spring; there was not a house within twenty miles; I do not believe that those days were as wild as days are now.

If a man told you something then you could depend on his word, and you could step out and kill something to eat anytime.