

KILGORE, WALTER

INTERVIEW #1326

28

BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

KILGORE, WALTER

INTERVIEW

1326

Field Worker's name Thad Smith, Jr.,

This report made on (date) April 19 1937

1. Name Walter Kilgore,

2. Post Office Address Chickasha, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 426 North 5th Street,

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month January Day 26 Year 1876

5. Place of birth Texas

6. Name of Father W. S. Kilgore, Place of birth Alabama

Other information about father Buried in Oklahoma

7. Name of Mother Margaret Moore Place of birth Georgia

~~Other information about mother~~ Buried in 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 4.

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Thad Smith, Jr.,  
Field Worker  
April 19, 1937

An Interview with Mr. Walter Kilgore,  
426 North 5th Street,  
Chickasha, Oklahoma.

I made my first trip into Oklahoma in the year 1896 from Texas.

One of our neighbors shipped a Case threshing machine to Al Reno, and he brought his own crew from Texas. I was one of them. The separator was made of wood, and the power was a steam engine.

We started threshing wheat near Al Reno where there were thousands of acres to be threshed. One morning I stood on the separator and counted nine threshing machines in sight.

The owner of the machine was named Vaughn, and he had his own cook shack where he fed the men. The cook quit before threshing season was over and I took the job. There were lots of Indians that would come by our machine and want something to eat, and they seemed to like baked sweet potatoes better than anything else we had to eat. Mr. Vaughn said to cook plenty and feed all of them that came by, which I did.

-2-

That fall when threshing season was over, the threshing machine was stored, and my boss begged me to go back to Texas with him, as all of the old crew had quit and had other jobs. I did not want to go back and said so, but told him I would go part way with him. We started back in a wagon and I stayed with him until we got about forty miles southeast of Oklahoma City, where I saw the finest cotton that I had ever seen. I grabbed my satchel, and told him good-bye, that I was going to pick some cotton. I got a job picking, and the pay was seventy-five cents per hundred. I stayed and picked for about six weeks, when there came a snow and I quit and

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went back to Texas. The next year I came back with the man who owned the threshing machine, and helped thresh near El Reno that summer. The farmers were making between eighteen and twenty-five bushels of wheat per acre, and some of them had not plowed their land before sowing. When we had finished threshing the year before it was late and some of the farmers did not think they had time to plow, so had just sown their wheat in the wheat stubble, and it made pretty good wheat too.

That fall, 1897, I went to Choctaw to see my

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1326

-3-

sweetheart, and then back to Texas, and in the summer of 1889 I came back to Oklahoma, and that fall, in September, Oklahoma City was having its first fair. They were fixing up a nice float for the parade, and wanted some young man and girl to get married on it during the parade, and were offering a housekeeping outfit to the lucky couple. I tried to persuade my sweetheart to marry me on the float; although she refused to do that we were married anyway.

At the fair farmers had brought cattle and horses and all kinds of produce, and different kinds of grain. They also had roulette wheels and dice tables on the street.

My wife and I rented a farm one mile south, and one-half mile east of Luther on the Deep Fork River. We stayed there one year and then moved to Texas.

In 1902 we moved back to Oklahoma and I bought a relinquishment on a quarter section of land in the Caddo country, twelve miles northwest of Chickasha. I gave nine hundred dollars for it. I dug a dugout on the land and covered it with logs. After I had put hay on the logs I covered it with dirt. I carried water from my neighbor's well, and being a water witch myself, I witched all over the place and the only place I could find water was where



my dugout was, so I continued to carry water from my neighbors until I sold out in 1903 for \$2000.00. While I was there I helped bale prairie hay with a horsepower baler. The hay was put in the baler and packed down with the feeder's foot; sometimes he would get his foot caught by the plunger that pushed the hay into the press, but no serious accident ever occurred.

In 1903 two other fellows and I went to the Kiamichi Mountains to hunt. The second day we were there we had killed four deer and a number of quail and prairie chickens, so we loaded our wagon and came back home.

In 1906 when Oklahoma was made a state, I was running a threshing machine, eight miles west of Chickasha. Our neighbor asked us to go to Chickasha with him to help celebrate the occasion, but due to our eagerness to finish threshing, we did not stop our work to go.