

KOCH, DELBERT

INTERVIEW

#9016

BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma  
KOCH, DELBERT INTERVIEW

9016

Field Worker's name Ida A. Merwin

This report made on (date) October 23 1937

1. Name Delbert Koch

2. Post Office Address Perry, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 906 8th Street

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 28 Year 1870

5. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name of Father Abraham Koch Place of birth Pennsylvania

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother De Etta (Oroke) Koch Place of birth Illinois.

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Ida A. Merwin  
Investigator  
October 23, 1937

Interview with  
Delbert Koch  
Perry, Oklahoma.

Delbert Koch, son of Abraham and De Etta (Oroke) Koch, was born in Blackhawk County, Iowa, August 28, 1870.

In October, 1892, I came from Kansas to Oklahoma, making the trip in a covered wagon and with me were my father and his family. We brought with us the necessary articles for housekeeping.

We located at Mulhall to await the opening of the Cherokee land as we were very anxious to secure land on which to make a home.

I spent considerable time in training my horse; he was a large horse that we used in the team while making our trip and I wanted him to be in good shape to make the Run.

On September 16, 1893, I entered the race from the south line, making the start at a point six miles east of Marshall. I was on horseback and

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rode fourteen miles in about forty minutes, staking land in Section 17, Range 21, Township 3 West, in Garfield County.

During the race there was a raging prairie fire and at times it was very difficult to pass through it.

During the first six months I built a two room box house but did not finish the inside; also fenced eighty acres of the land and about five years later I fenced the other eighty.

It was about eight years before I built more house room, then I added one room and finished the inside.

During the first year I broke about one hundred acres of sod, using the walking plow and I planted kaffir corn, cowpeas, castor beans, cane and melons.

The castor beans and melons were planted by hand, the others by a horse drawn planter. After two years I put the land in wheat and that was the

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main crop from then on.

Castor beans were a good crop and the price was around \$1.00 a bushel, but at the time of gathering if rainy weather prevailed, it was difficult to care for the castor beans as they had to be placed on the ground to pop open and needed dryness and sunshine for the best results.

I hauled my marketable crops to Perry, a distance of thirteen miles. Perry, Enid and Hennessey were the main towns then. I bought my supplies at Perry; food was very cheap and we raised most of what we used.

Flour could be bought for .50 cents a sack, and beans were only 2 or  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents a pound, salt pork could be had for 2 or 3 cents a pound.

I had a cane or molasses mill which I operated each Fall; usually averaging about thirteen hundred gallons each year. I would make up my cane and also made molasses for others, charging them 20 cents a gallon or I would take one half of the molasses

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which I could sell for 40 cents a gallon.

I located my house near a spring, which supplied the water until I could dig a well, and this well only needed to be dug eight feet deep and we had plenty of water.

The only timber on this land was cottonwood, which I used for fuel but it did not make good fuel.

My furniture was mostly home-made articles. I batched most of the time and did not need very good things; my sister would help me at times with the work.

I was married about ten years later.

I did not deal in live stock and only had two teams of mules for the farm work. I always kept a dog to guard against varmints.

Quail, prairie chicken and rabbits were plentiful and were useful for food. There were wolves, coyotes and antelope in this part of the country but I never did kill any.

There were some hard experiences in those days

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but people seemed happy and were always ready to help one another and, one of the best things, people were not in debt; if they needed anything and did not have the money, they did without until they could pay for it.

I kept this land about ten years, when I sold and bought a farm south of Hayward.

My health failed a few years ago and I moved to Perry where I now reside.