

LUMKIN, C. M.

INTERVIEW

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6-22--37.

Pioneer Story: C.M. Lumkin.
Told by one of the Lumkin daughters.

Reverend Mr. C. M. Lumkin, a Baptist preacher, was reared in Illinois and came to Texas in 1889 and made the move to what is now Harmon County in 1892.

Just before Christmas in 1892 the Reverend Mr. Lumkin and his family consisting of his wife and five children left Weatherford, Texas with four yoke of oxen and one team of horses, and about twenty head of cows.

The boys rode on horseback and herded the loose stock. The girls also rode on horseback when ever they chose to do so. They had saddles to use that had three horns.

In coming through the country they had only trails to follow and one evening a fierce "norther" blew up and they had to make camp. This camp was in what was then the Pedigree Ranch, about where Altus now is. They stayed in this camp about two weeks on account of the weather. Nevertheless they were cozy and warm for a neighbor there told them to get wood to burn wherever they cared to.

Then camping they would make a camp fire and cook in iron skillets and kettles; the skillets had iron lids on them which were used to put fire in, and they say that the finest bread in the world was cooked in these skillets.

They had plenty to eat on their way, as there were many prairie chickens, quail and rabbits.

They had a little contraption made of iron in a triangle shape with three short legs, that they used to set in the coals of fire and then they would set the coffee pot on it to keep it from turning over, this article was called a trivet.

~~It took the Lumkin family from just before Christmas~~
until the second day of February to come from Weatherford, Texas, to six miles west of what is now Vinson. It was called the O M Ranch at that time.

~~They set to work immediately after arriving cutting logs~~
to make a place of shelter. They had a tent that was put up and they lived in it and built them a half dug out of those logs. They also used the tent for a long time and then it was used to line the half dugout with.

Next came fixing a way to get water so they dug a well by hand to get water, but it was certainly not good for it was gyp water.

Texas:

The trading post was Quanah, it took three days to make the

trip to get supplies.

They get their mail from Mangum. It had been brought over on horse back from Wellington, Texas. It was thirty miles from Mangum. The first post office in that part of the country was at what was called Arlie, eighteen miles west of them. They would ride across the country maybe down a cow trail and maybe just across the country. Then later they would get their mail from a little place called "Madge". One of the daughters of this family was the first postmistress there and they called the place "Madge" after her. This was in 1894.

The first year this family was in this part of the country they killed and ate eighty wild turkey also plenty of prairie chicken and quail. They used those iron skilletts to cook them in.

Heat was boiled then dried and browned and ground in a hand mill and used as a substitute for coffee.

The story was told that one of these boys killed five wild turkeys with one shot of the old double barreled shot gun. They filled their shells themselves with caps, paper, powder, and shot.

One of the girls said that one time about one hundred and fifty wild turkeys came up in the back yard to drink water with the chickens. No men being at home she decided to shoot into the

bunch, and did, but one of the turkey hens jumped up and hollered, and she said it was saying "Stop" and she didn't have the nerve to shoot again.

There were no buffalo here at that time but there had been plenty for you could find many bones everywhere. There were plenty of coyotes and what was called "Lone Wolf" which was a great big fierce wolf.

In May of the year 1892 a horse fell with one of the sons and he was seriously injured; one of the brothers went to Wellington on horseback after the doctor but could not get him as his wife was ill and there was no other doctor there, so he started out home but somewhere over on Salt Fork he got lost for there was no road nor even a trail. One just had to ride across the country.

Anyway the boy didn't know where to go so slept the rest of the night with his saddle for a pillow and saddle blanket for his bed, with his pony tied to the horn of his saddle. Early the next morning when he could tell where to go he started for home and about a half of a mile from where he had slept he saw a big old cougar. When the young man arrived home his brother was dead. They buried this dead boy out on the prairie and this grave started what is now the Cave Creek Cemetery which is one mile south of what is now Vinson. The Reverend Mr. Lumkin died in 1905 and was buried in the Independence Cemetery five mile west of Vinson.