

HAYMAKER, CHARLES F.

INTERVIEW

15545

270

Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Alma W. McDowellThis report made on (date) March 29, 1938 1938

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1. Name Charles F. Haymaker  
 2. Post Office Address 117 S. Virginia, Bartlesville, Oklahoma  
 3. Residence address (or location) 117 S. Virginia, Bartlesville  
 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month March Day 5 Year 1887  
 5. Place of birth Andrews County, Missouri
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6. Name of Father John F. Haymaker Place of birth Illinois  
 Other information about father Buried 6 miles S. of Hennessey, Okla.  
 7. Name of Mother Christina Ream Haymaker Place of birth Illinois  
 Other information about mother Buried south of Hennessey
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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 9

Alone D. McDowell  
Research Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149  
March 29, 1938

#13545

272

Interview with  
Charles F. Haymaker  
117 S. Virginia  
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Charles F. Haymaker was born March 5,  
1857, in Andrews County, Missouri.

Parents - John F. and Christina Ream-  
Haymaker, both natives of Illinois. They are  
buried in the Haymaker Cemetery, six miles South  
of Hennessey, Oklahoma.

I first came to the Indian Territory  
from Kansas in November, 1883, and settled on a  
rented farm near Lightning Creek postoffice, now  
known as Alluwe, in Nowata County. I rented this  
place from Mr. Tanner, son-in-law of the Delaware  
Chief Charles Journeycane. I farmed in Nowata  
County for one year then removed to Rollins County,  
Kansas.

In 1889 I returned to the Indian Territory  
to make the run into the Unassigned Land in hopes  
of securing a claim. We followed the Old Santa Fe  
Trail from Northwest Kansas, through Caldwell, ~~to~~  
to Dover and Kingfisher. I went to Caldwell and  
made the run on horseback from a point south of

-2-

Caldwell. I did not get a claim but later homesteaded 160 acres of Blackjack timber land which I cleared for cultivation. This place was near Wellston, 12 miles southwest of Chandler, in Lincoln County. When we arrived at our new home there was nothing but the unimproved timber land. The first summer we lived in a wagon box with a wagon sheet stretched over it for shelter. That summer I cut logs and built a rough log house where we lived for several years. We bought our supplies at Dover and Hanessey.

This farm was located among the Kickapoo Indians and <sup>we</sup> found them a reserved tribe who did not molest their white neighbors if they were not mistreated.

The mode of travel was very slow in those days and it took us 12 days to drive from Nowata to Wellston with a team and wagon.

#### THE OPENING

Among the throngs of people assembled along the border were preachers, farmers, gamblers, mechanics, in fact people from all walks of life.

-3-

While we were camped along the line we heard preaching, shooting, swearing and betting at any time of the day or night. This multitude of homeseekers included people from every state in the Union. Order generally prevailed for most of the people were good natured. Hundreds made the trip to the border for speculation and many came through curiosity but most of them were moved by an impulse to seek land and build a home.

Those who prepared to make the race had come from different directions and were posted on all sides of the promised lands. They moved from the Kansas border to the north line, others were lined up along the west border of the Iowa-Kickapoo Reservation on the east, and on the Cheyenne and Arapaho country on the west while others were stationed in the South Canadian Valley on the south.

Some were over-anxious and slipped in and concealed themselves near the best claims so that they would not have far to travel when the opening hour arrived. These people were known

-4-

as "sooners" and one of them beat me to my claim. Some of these men had been on the claim long enough to plant a garden before the opening date. Because of this unfair deal, Oklahoma ~~was~~ is known as the "Sooner State".

The Kansas towns nearest the Oklahoma country were over crowded until the opening day. The race started at noon, April 22, 1889, and from day break until the stated hour the four boundary lines of the promised land were lined with wagons, buck boards, carts, buggies, prairie schooners, and every conceivable conveyance while others were there on horse back and many on foot.

The nervous tension of waiting was terrible and even the horses seemed to sense the strain and were eager and impatient to start.

The soldiers were stationed at intervals to keep order while awaiting the signal which would start the race. When the bugle sounded the soldier fired a revolver and the race was on.

The land office was located at Guthrie

-5-

and after the race for a claim was over and the claim staked, another race to the land office to file the claim was begun. Families were at home that first-night in tents, covered wagons or any place that provided shelter. I have the <sup>riding</sup> bridle I used in this race.

### SCHOOLS

The first school in our community was held in a dugout, with dirt walls and floors. We dug back into a bank and made a room large enough to accommodate our small enrollment and boarded the front up with rough boards. The seats were made of slabs with two inch holes bored into them where the legs were driven into the slab. There were no backs on the seats and we had no desks. There was a shelf in one end of the room where the older children could stand to write. We used this dugout for a school house for two years then built a frame building from scrap lumber where school was held. I have a picture of the old dugout with the teacher, Miss Rosenoran, and her ten pupils. ~~Miss~~ Thompson, one of the pupils in the

-6-

picture later became a school teacher so we felt that our efforts were not in vain. I served on the first school board of this pioneer school. This school is known as the Sunflower District, Lincoln County, and now has a modern, up-to-date stone building located on Highway #66 between Wellston and Oklahoma City, about one-half mile south of the old dugout site. The new building is three and one-half miles west of Wellston on the left hand side of the road. My granddaughter graduated from the eighth grade at the new school.

#### CHURCHES

The churches were scattered when we first settled in Lincoln County but after the excitement of getting settled following the land opening, churches were soon organized in the community. The first church in our immediate vicinity was held in a log building and was a union meeting where all denominations worshipped.

The Indians held their camp meetings in the summer but we seldom attended them. I remember on one occasion I took my son to Dover to one of the



-7-

meetings and he was nearly frightened to death.

We forded the Cimarron River south of Dover. There was also a ford across this river south of where Crescent is now.

Old Ingram was a small trading post on the Iowa-Kickapoo Reservation, about two miles North of Wellston.

Rhines Half Way House was another pioneer trading post and camping ground for the freighters, located in Oklahoma County about 16 miles Northwest of Wellston and about 8 miles North of Luther.

The Kickapoo Indian Agency was at Wellston when we first came there but the following spring it was moved to McLoud. Captain Dewese was over the Kickapoo Mission at Wellston.

Our first newspaper "The Publist" was published at Chandler but this was several years after the land opening.

The Frisco Railroad was built through Hennessey in about 1900 and a little later the Fort Smith & Western line was completed.

The early day recreation was much different

-8-

from the present day. If we went to town twice a year it was quite an occasion. About the only other recreation was deer and quail hunting.

The country was infested with wild animals, mountain lions, wild cats, wolves and panthers. One night my son, Oscar, was returning from Old Ingram with a friend. A panther followed about 50 feet behind them and they had no way of escape for they were on foot. If they walked fast the panther increased its gait. They were afraid to run and when they arrived home it was closing in on them.

I made the trip to the Cherokee Strip opening with my brother in 1893 but did not try to secure a claim. This run was quite different from the one in 1889. I made the run on horse back with my brother. He secured a claim. The first year following the Strip opening the people suffered a hard time and we lived on corn bread, Kafircorn and water.

There was a toll bridge across the Canadian River at Bridgeport which was built several years after the opening.

-9-

Dr. Williams bought the first automobile at Wellston and Dr. G.R. Norman owned the first one at Luther. This was a great curiosity to the community and it was some time before they became accustomed to the gasoline buggies, for that was what they were.

In about 1915 I was planting corn one day when I heard a roaring noise in the air and looked up to see what I later learned was an airplane and will have to admit I was frightened out of my wits..

In 1882 I was united in marriage to Miss Lillie V. Spurgeon in Elk County, Kansas. I lost my wife last year after we had spent 55 years of married life together. We are the parents of six children of which four are deceased. In November, 1931, we removed to Bartlesville where I now live with my son, Osear, who is the pastor of the Assembly of God Church.