

MOTT, FRANK E.

INTERVIEW

4327

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

MOTT, FRANK E.

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Field Worker's name Elizabeth L. Duncan.

This report made on (date) June 4, 1937

1. Name Frank E. Lott

2. Post Office Address Medford, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) 135 S. Park St.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month February Day 29 Year 1868

5. Place of birth Rochelle, Illinois (Lee County)

6. Name of Father Gilbert Mott Place of birth Vermont

7. Name of Mother Aurilla Hedge Place of birth New York State.

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 Four.

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Elizabeth L. Duncan,
Field Worker.
June 4, 1937.

Interview with Frank E. Mott,
Medford, Oklahoma.

Mr. Mott made the race in the Crenins of the Cherokee Strip, September 16, 1893, starting five miles west of Caldwell, on horseback. In an hour and fifteen minutes he staked his claim two miles east and one mile south of Medford on the SE₂ of Section 26-27N-5W, in Grant County. He pitched his tent and lived in it while there. Since he had no supplies nor funds with which to buy anything, he had to go away to work. While he was away at work one time a man by the name of Higgins jumped his claim and had moved a little shack on it. When Mr. Mott came back to his place that was what he found. He asked Mr. Higgins how he happened to be there, and Mr. Higgins told him he had already filed on the place. Mr. Mott did not know just what to do but he thought he would find out for sure, so he went to the Registration Bureau at Enid and found that Mr. Higgins was only bluffing. When he returned to his claim, Mr. Higgins was gone but the shack was still standing. Mr. Mott then built a sod house, consisting

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of one large room, and then returned to his work. While he was away Mr. Higgins again came and this time he moved the shack.

The second year Mr. Mott sent his brother to Kansas after two head of horses so they could break out the sod and plant some crops. During the same year he built a frame house, 14' x 14' to replace the sod house. He also dug two wells, using a peach twig to locate the first; the second was located by test auger at the depth of 20 feet.

Both wells were strong veins of water and never did go dry. Before the wells were dug, they had to haul water from Medford, some three miles away.

The first plow Mr. Mott bought was known as a "sod breaker", a rod plow which he bought from Mr. S. Robertson, who had established in a tent on the east side of the Rock Island railroad the very first hardware store in Medford. His first crop was kaffir corn but it was burned up during the summer; this caused Mr. Mott to go back to Kansas to haul wheat. The wage was \$2.00 a day with team, or \$1.00 a day, single handed.

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The third year he bought a cultivator from Mr. McClain who had established his hardware and feed store in Medford. In the year of 1896, Mr. Mott went back to Canton, Kansas, and worked there for .75¢ per day, furnishing a team; he was there some six weeks but got only sixteen days work as it was so wet they could not work. That winter was a very hard one for him as work was so scarce. He helped to break sod for other people to earn a living. In one instance he was breaking sod for Dr. Carpenter and went without food until his work was done, and then received \$5.00 and a shotgun for breaking out ten acres of ground. He then had to walk to town three miles through the cold to get some groceries, which he purchased from a little store known as the Jim Mallen Store. That winter there was also a blizzard which lasted some thirty-six hours. It was so blinding that quite a number of cattle and horses froze to death. The cattle were turned loose on the prairies to care for themselves. When Mr. Mott went to look for his two horses he found them on Cottonwood Creek, covered with snow. One horse had to be dug out, and the other was hemmed in be-

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tween two snowdrifts some twelve feet high.

As the years went by, he gradually gathered together a little more and profited by the year before.

In the spring of 1904 Mr. Mott was married. Late that fall they finished building an eight-room house. Mrs. Mott hated to leave the little house (the 14 x 14) as it seemed more like home to her than the new one; however, they moved into the new house for that winter. Mrs. Mott then moved all her nice furniture that she had brought with her from home into the new home. They raised many chickens and sold eggs and chickens to help with the living expenses. They lived on this farm until 1929 when they sold out and moved to Medford.