

SHOPE, LAWRENCE (Mrs.)

INTERVIEW

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Hazel B. Greene,
Interviewer.
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An Interview With Mrs. Lawrence
Shope, Hugo, Oklahoma.

My father was Joe Long and he was born and raised in Missouri. My mother was Mary Bridges and was raised in Texas. They married and came to the Indian Territory about 1878, I guess, I know it was long before I was born in 1885. The doctors had said that Mother was in the last stages of consumption, so they set out traveling all over the country for her health. Father first settled out in the Western part of the Indian country; then they came to Limestone Gap, about twelve miles north of Atoka, and near the railroad station of Chockie. I was born at Limestone Gap. That railroad station was named for some Indian girl twins. So the story goes. I was told that their names were Chickie and Chockie LeFlore. Then after Chickie died the station was called just Chockie, instead of Chickie-Chockie.

Mother's health kept improving until she seemed pretty well. She got fat, but was never able to work much. However she lived until 1928.

There was no school for us to attend out in the country, so we moved into Atoka, when I was about fourteen years old,

and then we attended the Indian school. What I mean by "Indian school" is that it was free for Indian children, but we had to pay and buy our books too. We paid \$1.50 per month per pupil, and there were several of us. That made it right expensive for us all to go.

Father and mother ran the Arcade and other hotels in Atoka for years and years. That was where I met Lawrence Shope, whom I afterward married. He was a switchman on the M. K. & T. Railroad.

My name was Zettie Long. Lawrence Shope was from Pennsylvania, and we had the honor of being married by Dr. J. S. Murrow, who came to this country settling in Atoka in the year 1867, and who, in 1869, on the first Sunday in May organized the First Baptist Church with seven charter members. He also organized the first Masonic Lodge and the first Eastern Star Chapter at Atoka. He also named Atoka. Atoka means "a place of much water". I think Dr. Murrow lived to be about ninety years old. Our daughter had the honor of being married by him and by Judge Linebaugh. They both officiated at her wedding in 1928.

After Mr. Shope and I were married we bought a place out five miles east of Stringtown. It was a dandy place, but when our children got old enough to attend school, we moved to Atoka again, because the nearest school was three and one-half miles away from our home. Mr. Shope started railroading again, and became a conductor. There was a story that a messenger and his son, with a chest of gold, which was to be paid to Indians were murdered near our place near Stringtown, and that the gold was dumped into a little old creek that ran through our place. So we consulted a Ouija board, and it told us exactly where to look for that chest of gold, but we didn't find it.

I don't remember anything particularly interesting that occurred as I grew up. Father was just a farmer, and later a hotel keeper. I do remember there would be great crowds of people from just everywhere, when United States Court would be going on. The hotel was always so crowded that they would sometimes sleep three in a bed. And then would have to turn some away.

I remember, too that it seemed that some of the people over the country waited until they came to court at Atoka

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to settle old grudges.

Once, two Indians met on the street and shot each other to death, one died instantly, the other kept shooting until he died. Father took us children to see it and it made me so sick that I fainted. The only time I ever did faint, I guess.

Father dealt in stock, the raising of cattle, horses and such, when they lived out in the western part of the State, but he farmed near Atoka.

The present town of Atoka, is not the original one. Old Atoka is about a mile west of the present town. It was moved to the railroad.

None of us were any part Indian, consequently were not interested in the payments, except that our hotel business was better when the Choctaw Indians were getting their payments. We were usually too busy at those times to know what was going on down town, and I didn't pay much attention to public affairs.

We were more interested in the church and the work to be done there. Dr. Murrow was a wonderful man and I am

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thankful that it was my privilege to know a man who was so prominent in the upbuilding of the Indian Territory.

We have been living in Hugo, Oklahoma just since June of this year. We own and operate a new and used furniture store.