

PUCKETT, LOUIS

FIFTH INTERVIEW

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James R. Carseloway, Interviewer,
September 24, 1937

Interview with Louis Pucket,
Vinita, Oklahoma.

In the year of 1899, I was living near Caney in Rogers County. My wife's health was bad and we decided to travel around awhile. We hitched up our old team to the wagon, put an old time top cover on it and traveled over the country for about two years.

Finally we came to a Mormon community. I was a Campbellite and was prejudiced against other denominations and particularly against the Mormons and I soon found out that no one could get a job there unless he was a Mormon, so we left there and went to the coal banks.

While working around there, I got up one morning to find one of my horses gone and a young fellow missing from the neighborhood at the same time, so I decided that my horse had been stolen and began

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making some enquiries. I was told that there was an organized band of horse thieves working in that section, and that there would be little chance to get the horse back again.

I decided that I would try to get the horse back and one cold, rainy morning, in the fall of 1900, after my horse had been gone for about twenty-four hours, armed with a six-shooter and a shotgun, I took the road and rode for many days. At night, cold and worn out, I would build a fire and stay in the woods.

Finally, I began to see signs of a settlement along a creek, and some improvements off the road. I followed the road to the place where I found four or five log cabins and one of which looked pretty good. I called out, "Hello", and a white man with a long red beard came to the door and invited me to get down. I did and we put my

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horse in his barn and fed it and went into the house. There I found that he had a Choctaw Indian wife, and several children. He would talk English to me but talked Choctaw to his wife and children and I got to studying over the matter, thinking he might be one of those thieves and that he would take my horse and kill me. About the time I was ready to make my get-away, he called me to supper. I noticed the children at the table were sitting there quietly and behaving themselves

and I noticed that after we sat down the old man returned thanks. That certainly made me feel better for I knew that there wasn't any danger for me there.

After supper, as I was tired out, he showed me to a bed in a little side room and when I heard them talking in Choctaw, I began to get scared again but finally went to sleep. I had not been asleep long

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before I felt someone shaking me and the old man was at the side of the bed, whispering, "Don't get scared. I want to talk to you. Put on your clothes."

I soon had my clothes on again, and the old man said, "My boy saw your horse late this evening about a mile east of here but there is only one way for you to get him. I will take you down there, show you the barn where he is, and if you want to, you can go in and get him."

He gave me my guns and we slipped out of the house and we made our way by the moonlight to the barn, which was quite a large one with a high rail fence around it. There were some dogs which barked a little, but did not make much racket and I went in at the back end of the barn. The moon was shining and my horse saw me and nickered. I felt around the wall until I found a bridle and led my horse out the back way.

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The old man had told me how to come back to his house; he said to ride in the hollow and not in the road. I made my way carefully, until I came to his fence and followed that until I came to his house. He met me outside, made me promise not to tell who had helped me find my horse and I rode home..

I later found out that this old man was a Mormon preacher and that took away most of my prejudice against the Mormons. I decided that no matter what church a man belongs to he can

lead a Christian life if he wants to.