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CAPPS, ROBERT

INTERVIEW

#12114

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12114

Interviewer, Grace Kelley,  
November 15, 1937.

Interview with Robert Capps,  
Henryetta, Okla.

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#### Home Ginning of Cotton.

After supper cotton was put on the hearth to get warm so the seeds would come out easily. Then everyone sat and picked the seeds from the cotton by hand. We would get enough cotton "ginned" that night to last all the next day. The next night we would clean cotton again so mother could spin the cotton and knit our stockings. I never wore "store" socks until after mother died. Then we made a gin. Two sticks were put together like a rubber roller wringer. The seeds fell out on one side and the lint on the other. We could get enough cotton for a pair of stockings in a little while and it wasn't so tedious.

The new ground made from one to two bales of cotton to the acre.

#### Friendly Neighbors.

People were close with strangers going through, especially if there were no women with them but after they

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settled down like they were going to stay everyone helped each other to get started. They had house-raisings, making rails and fences, clearing ground. Everyone helped and never thought about charging for the work. If someone was sick everyone went and helped in every way possible from sitting up with the sick, bringing in what was needed; sheets or pillow cases, gowns, rags, or food. I believe there were better friends then, at least they showed their friendship more than they do now.

#### Horse Hunting on Rock Creek.

Eud Norton, Bill Moudy, John, Jim and Billie Brooks, Redford and I decided to get a bunch of wild horses for this reason:

There was an old stallion with a bunch of about fifty or sixty horses. When people started settling on Rock Creek, people would turn their horses out and when this stallion saw one he liked he would round it up, just like a cowboy rounded a cow into a herd, and drive it on with the bunch. He went clear to Sulphur and Heart and every time he changed, he added from one to two to his herd. If you tried to take your mare from him, he would run at you with

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his mouth wide open like he would tear you to pieces and you would have to dodge to get away from him. He would rear up on his hind legs and paw and fight. We never did get him and we tried all the tricks we knew. Finally one of the farmers shot him, after we had trapped his herd.

To catch these wild horses we cut logs and built a big corral across one of their run. Then we cut trees and let them fall with the tops together like a brush fence, making wings from both sides of the gate two or three miles long. They would keep dodging from one tree top to the next. They thought they were going around the tree tops but were really following the course we had set for them. When they saw a gap open they would make a dash for freedom through the gate. Some of us would quickly shut the gate and then the real fun started. They had to be roped and broke to ride after we had cut out the ones the stallion had stolen.

Bud Norton was riding a fast, heavy, well-trained horse when we were driving them in. He rode up behind one and caught its tail and wrapped it around his saddle horn. He and his horse held it until one of the boys could rope it.

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This one had been determined that he would not go into the corral and bud was trying to force him into it.

#### Five or Six Acre Rock.

Between Rock Creek and Mill Creek, about three miles in the mountains, there was a gray granite rock with five or six acres in sight. It was flat like the ground but nothing grew on it.

#### Shipping and Freighting.

When Joe Hoff ordered supplies from Texas he got cheaper rates by letting them ship to Washita Switch until Davis started, then to Davis. When he ordered from the north they shipped to Pauls Valley. There were fewer mountains to Pauls Valley so we would rather go there. There were only two or three miles difference. We used four yoke of oxen to a big wagon and trail wagon. I drove a span of mules to another wagon. It usually took two days to make the trip. Sometimes we drove into town to the depot, loaded up and drove three or four miles back and camped for the night. If there was an emergency or the store was entirely out of what we were hauling, and the moon was shining we drove in that night but we didn't

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do that as a rule. We never were bothered by robbers and do not think any others were either. I think the freighters who were "robbed" took pay to drop off some of their stuff for the "robbers" to get. Later, the wagon yards fixed a room where the freighters could load up the wagons, put them in this room and lock them up until the next morning when they wanted to pull out for home. I never used them but I know they had them. The Sandys were like Coal Creek. We would go around the heads and cross here they were shallow. If they were up we would have to wait two or three hours until they ran down.

#### Comanches in 1890.

When the Comanches came over into the Chickasaw country, peacefully, the men wore breach cloths of skins that were laced up on the sides with the same skin for laces. The women had squares of cloth that had been torn off instead of being cut with scissors. This was tied in the back around the waist and was their only clothing. From the waist up was bare.

#### Restaurants in 1897 and 1900.

In 1897, I was married and we had a restaurant in Davis. The country had settled up thicker and an eating house was

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in demand. Indians, cowmen, and mowers were our customers. Regular dinners were twenty-five cents, but the soup, chili, and lunches were more popular. We would get a half a beef leg for about a quarter-for three and four cents a pound- and it would make a five gallon boiler full of soup by adding vegetables. We sold a big bowl of soup or chili for five cents and it was good stuff, too. Then we always had pie, cake and good coffee.

Our first restaurant was at Davis and then in 1900 we had one at Oakman.

#### Lost Child Episode-1904.

In 1904 we moved to Dewar and I was digging coal for Jim and John Wise, where the K.O.&G. bridge on Coal Creek is now.

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John Fay lived on the edge of Dewar and a widow and her two year old boy were staying there. One day she went somewhere and left the boy (he still wore dresses) with John's wife. He ran off, taking his little dog with him and got lost. There were no houses, just wilderness, mountains and timber and big rocks. northwest of Dewar.

( And in fact that is just about all there is now. )



The next morning the little dog came home and we just knew the little fellow had been eaten by the wolves, which were plentiful in there. Later, we learned he slept on a big flat rock that night and about the time the dog came home he went east from the rock and came to the home of an Indian named Mrs. Gray. He called "Hello" until an Indian boy came out; then asked for breakfast and told them he was lost. He told them that he lived with Uncle John Ray and asked if they knew where he lived. The Indian boy gave him some breakfast and said he would go get a horse to take him home but the little fellow was afraid to let him out of sight. He grabbed a biscuit and followed him.

We were fixing to drag the creek for him as some of the miners thought the mother might have killed her boy. Everyone had hunted for twenty-four hours and supposed if he wasn't in the creek we would have found him.

The Gray boy took him to John Ray's and he shot the signal that the boy was found. We quit our preparations and returned to the house where the little fellow was; his dress was torn off during his wanderings.