

LAWTON, GRACE.

INTERVIEW

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

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Field Worker's name Maude M. Fink
 This report made on (date) June 23 1937

1. Name Mrs. Grace Lawton
 2. Post Office Address Arapaho, Oklahoma
 3. Residence address (or location) Arapaho, Oklahoma
 4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month November Day 4 Year 1867
 5. Place of birth Kansas

6. Name of Father J.H. Watts Place of birth England
 Other information about father farmer
 7. Name of Mother Lucy Shoue Place of birth England
 Other information about mother housewife

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

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Maude M. Fink,
Field Worker,
June 23, 1937.

Mrs. Lawton came from Havensville, Kansas, to the Cherokee Strip in April, 1893, and filed on a claim then went back for the first month. The first time she came was before the strip was opened up.

There was a mix up when she started as she got on the wrong train and so she had to wait over another day. The trains were all full and crowded. Some of the passengers were people who were coming to the new territory to make claims and others were coming to see the run.

Mrs. Lawton filed on a claim two miles north of Arapaho. Jesse Campbell was the locating agent. Mr. Campbell and Mrs. Lawton rode all over the country looking for a claim, and Mrs. Lawton finally located two miles north of Arapaho. In the early days there was running water on this place, but in the last ten years it has dried up.

Mrs. Lawton had to leave Kansas on account of her health. She had asthma and the doctors in Kansas thought that living in this country would be good for her health.

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Mrs. Lawton had a dugout on her farm, but she did not stay there long. She would just go over on the week ends. There were a few sod houses which were made of planks sticking out about four feet out of the ground then tents were put on them.

There were thousands of prairie chickens. The early settlers just used the breasts of these chickens.

Mrs. Lawton worked in her brother's hardware store. They did their banking at Watonga and El Reno at the start.

John Seger was the Superintendent of the Indian Schools at Seger founded in 1886.

The first church was a Congregational church and it was founded July 17, 1892.

A meeting of the citizens of Arapaho was called by Elder J. H. Parker for the consideration of a proposition to build a congregational church. The members present were W.W. Shawles, H.E. Van Trees, W. C. Symons, Joel Cokely, J.P. Connelly, J. B. Nicholas, S. J Dyer, Jas. Dawson, W. F. Caboniss, Carlton and J.W. Lawton.

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The proposition made by Elder Parker was that \$500.00 be furnished to build a Congregational church and this church was to be used for one year at least for school purposes if desired.

The people were to haul the lumber from El Reno, Kingfisher and Minco to erect the building.

It was moved by Mr. S.J. Dyer that the proposition be accepted which motion was unanimously.

It was moved by Mr. Dyer that the Chairman appoint three trustees and this motion was carried. The trustees appointed were W. W. Shawles, H.E. Van Trees and S.J. Dyer, Elder J. H. Parker was elected moderator and J.W. Lawton, secretary.

Mr. Seger worked with a band of reckless Indians who had only thirty ponies, but now are among the wealthiest and most influential of the Cheyenne Tribe. This is a striking example of what a practical teacher can do with the redman.

They had an Indian scare. The cattlemen killed one

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man and wounded another. The white people sent to El Reno for soldiers. Thirty Infantrymen came out, but the matter had been settled when they reached here.

Mrs. Lawton had a cabbage patch, the cattle would run all over it. One day she ran cattle for half a day, they almost ruined her cabbage, but finally the cattlemen came and got them.

Mr. Lawton has run a newspaper, the "Arapaho Bee" since 1892. It used to be called the "Arrow". In 1928 Mrs. Lawton sold it to Mr. Leatherrock; now a man named Dick Mitchell is running it. Mr. Henry ran it after Mr. Leatherrock, then Mr. Kyle, now Mr. Mitchell. The paper started with an army press which lay flat like a wringer.

There were two Indian scares. All the white people moved into town so they would be close together. The Indians did not intend to do them any harm. They arrested the Indians and Seger and Fillmore went and talked to them.

There was an Indian named Mad Wolfe, who would go around peddling rotten eggs. Everyone would stay shy of him.

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There were thirty cars full of men lined up from Clinton who had come to take the courthouse but another crowd of people went up and made them leave it alone.

Clinton would pay people to vote for the courthouse. They had three or four fights over it. Finally Custer City joined in with Arapaho and got it. Now Arapaho has a beautiful courthouse built at a cost of \$100,000.00. It has modern equipment.

The Indians hung their babies on clothes line to black them. They said they were too white.
