

LEE, LELIA C.

INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker: Warren D. Morse  
March 30, 1937

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BIOGRAPHY OF: Mrs. Lelia C. Lee  
500 Main Street  
Duncan, Oklahoma

BORN: 1873, Logan Co. Arkansas

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I came to Oklahoma in 1891 when I was eighteen years old and settled at Muldrow, Oklahoma. There I met and married Mr. Tom Lee.

Mr. Lee's father was one-sixteenth Cherokee and his mother was a Choctaw Indian. He and his sister were educated at Talequah. In those days there were not so many Indians who attended school.

When the Indians were given money in those days they did not go to their capital. They went to certain districts and a place was roped off and a man called the names off by numbers. One time when we drew out money, it was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Gaylon were with us. We were driving a rubber-tired buggy. Including our son's share, we had nearly a thousand dollars, all together.

When we started home, we came to a thicket and some men jumped out and scared our horses. Mr. Lee ran over the one who jumped in front of the horses, another shot at us from behind, but the horses were thoroughly frightened and ran at such a terrific rate of speed that the shot did no harm.

We got home late in the night and as all the banks

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1 the money under

his pillow and laid a gun in a chair by the side of the <sup>79</sup> bed. The next morning he went to Muldrow and put most of the money in the bank to buy a poney and he kept a little out. I wish you could have seen the horse, it had a hip knocked out of joint, but he doctored it and made a good horse out of him. Our cow was a Texas Long-horn and so wild that I could not milk her at all. My husband got tired of her kicking him so much so we had to sell her.

That fall we moved to Muldrow Mountains and stayed for some time. Later we moved to Coalgate, Oklahoma and Mr. Lee was a paymaster for the mines, working under John Harrison. We then moved to Atoka. They ruled the Indians to the mothers' side was one reason we went down there.

When we moved to Marlow, Oklahoma Mr. Lee became United States Marshall. We bought sixty acres of land from Charles Harris, who had married an Indian. She had a daughter who was not of age. Mr. George Putty, Mr. Lee's attorney told him that the deed was no good, because the girl did not come into full heirship until she was of legal age. After Mr. Lee had started fruit trees and had fixed the place up, Mr. Harris saw that there was such a fine change in the place that he wanted to go back on his agreement and get the place back.

One morning our two dogs lay dead on the front porch. A man who lived down the lane came by there and asked Lee what was wrong. Mr. Lee told him that Charles Harris had killed his dogs. This old man went straight to Harris and told him what Mr. Lee had said.

That afternoon we went to town. While Mamie and I were in a store shopping, Mr. Harris met my husband and called him a few words. Mr. Lee knocked Harris down, when he got up he had a pistol in his hand. They told me that Harris always carried a gun up his sleeve someway. Before Mr. Lee could get to him Harris shot his gun hand first and then killed him.

I didn't know Mr. Lee could talk Indian until we went to a picnic and he asked me what I wanted. I told him I wanted Red Lemonade and a shandwich. I turned to an Indian who was running the stand and told him what I wanted, but he couldn't understand, so Mr. Lee told him in the Indian language. It sounded so funny I had to laugh and Indians don't like to be laughed at.

Mr. Lee had a young sister who was raised by Mrs. John Breedlove, of Muldrow. The last time I heard of her she was living in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. When she came to see us at Atoka she came on Tom's birthday, rode a horse all the way. I did not see how she came all the way from Ft. Smith by herself and did not get scared as rough as the country was then. She rode back home the next morning.

Our great sport was fishing, one spring day we went fishing to Caney Creek in a buggy. It didn't take us long to catch all the fish we needed. Sometimes we had "Corn-shelling Bees". We would spread two big quilts down and invite a lot of the neighbors and it was lots of fun.

One time at Marlow the Circle women entertained the

W. O. W. men. There was a Whittier's Poetry book for the <sup>81</sup> neatest and prettiest woman and a Pipe as a prize for the best-looking man. I was very surprised when they voted me the prettiest woman. A Mr. Roe got the pipe.

Uncle John Lee donated ten acres of land to Muldrow for a cemetery. It was three or four miles south of Muldrow and they named it the Lee Cemetery.

THE END