

FOUR, HATTIE DENTERS

INTERVIEW.

12/26

POLING, HATTIE DEWEES. INTERVIEW.

77

Glenn F. Curd
Field Worker--April 26, 1937
Indian Pioneer History

An interview with Mrs. Hattie
Deweese Poling, Wellston, Oklahoma.

My father and mother with a family of nine children came from the State of Indiana to Indian Territory in 1889. Father was appointed postmaster and post trader for the Indians by President Harrison for the town of Wellston which was twelve miles from the Oklahoma line, in the Kickapoo reservation, and consisted of one store and postoffice combined, and one dwelling which we occupied.

About a year and half after the opening of Old Oklahoma in 1889, we were quietly sitting around the fire, in our living quarters after supper and father had closed his store. As I remember it was dark. A voice outside said, "Hello." Father went to the door and of course we children did too. The light from the door shone out on two white men on horses surrounded by Indians on horses. I don't know how many horses and men there were. One of the Indians called father by his Indian name, "Ke Skitchee, we catchum white men steal our horses." Then they told father the best they could in their language and some English too,

2

how they had come upon the two white men at their hay stacks where their ponies were eating hay, and said they were lighting matches to see which ponies they wanted to take.

The white men said they had got off the road and were lighting matches trying to find their way.

Trails were dim in those days and an argument went on between the Indians and the two white men for sometime. Then the Indians told father if he would take the two men in and keep them till daylight and then they would leave the country, they would let them go. Father agreed to take them in and see that they left the country as soon as it was light enough to travel. The men were very obedient and eager to have the shelter of our home.

The Indians we supposed went to their homes but the next morning we found them only a little farther back. They had stood guard all night to see that the men left at daylight without their ponies. The two pale faces (and they were pale) were glad to get off so easily and no doubt had no desire to feel again the wrath of the Kickapoo Tribe.