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Date: February 18, 1937

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BIOGRAPHY OF Tom E. Roland  
Armore, OklahomaBORN May 30, 1865  
Bilma, Lincoln Parish, Louisiana

Father: Henry E. Roland Mother: Martha A. Colvin

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In 1892, I moved from Paris, Texas, to Four Rock Springs, about ten miles east of Madill, Oklahoma. The country was sparsely populated at that time. Governor Burney lived about two miles south of our place, and one-half mile from the present town of Aylesworth.

Burney was a well-to-do Chickasaw Indian, and a great leader among his tribe, both socially and religiously. He was a member of the Presbyterian church, and also took a great part in governmental affairs of the Chickasaws. On many occasions he was sent as a delegate to Washington.

We lived twenty-five miles from the market at Denison and had two rivers to cross on the way there, Washita and Red River. We were four miles from the Lynn post office and eight miles from a doctor.

There was a Dr. Thomas living at Oakland. Who did all the practice around Madill. Arthur Boone was working at the gin in Oakland at this time. He got his hand caught in a saw and cut off three fingers. Dr. Thomas had neither tools or anesthetic, with which to perform an operation which had to be performed on the hand. The only thing left to do was to take a hand-saw, and a case knife properly

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properly sharpened and amputate the three fingers at the joints above where they had been cut off.

I spent my first night in Ardmore in 1893. There was only one brick building in town. This was located just one block east of the old Santa Fe depot, and was occupied by the first National Bank. That night the whole block in which this building was located burned up. The business district at that time consisted of three blocks. A short while after this I had my arm cut off in a gin, and went to live at Grady, Oklahoma, with my brother-in-law, who was a Methodist preacher at that place. The principal part of the population consisted of Indians and Infidels.

The Chisholm Trail crossed up near Fleetwood. It ran about five miles to the east of the Comanche Indian line.

After spending eighteen months at Grady, I moved to Ardmore. At that time every man in town was a member of the fire department. The fire alarm was sounded by the shooting of pistols and rifles. At every fire we always saved the well, although there was usually no water left in it.

In 1898, I was appointed as guard at the "Bull Pen". Guards there at that time were Bill Jones, Luke Johnson, Bob Cummings, and others.

Colonel Doake built the two store brick building on Main Street where Thompson's Cafe is now located. It was used as a Federal Court building, and the new "Bull Pen" was constructed just west of it. The west wall of the court building was used as the east wall of the enclosure. The prisoners which ran all the way from sixty to one hundred

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sixty in number were kept in a frame building in the center of the enclosure. The negro prisoners occupied the south end of the building and the white prisoners the north end. During the two and one-half years I served at the jail not a prisoner escaped. There was only one escape planned that I ever knew about. The white men burned out a large hole in the floor, and worked several days digging out a tunnel underneath the jail wall and into Mr. Doake's yard west of the prison. Doake had a little boy about three or four years old. This child was in the yard playing and heard the prisoners digging trying to break the frozen dirt so as to escape into the yard.

We kept two types of prisoners: Federal and "Sandy Land" or civil cases. The Santa Fe railroad, had a special built car which they kept ready at all time to transport prisoners to Fort Leavenworth.

A. C. Cruce and W. B. Johnson served as Prosecuting Attorneys for the Federal Government, and Bob Dick and H. A. Brown were the leading defense lawyers.

John Bonner was one of the notorious characters which we kept at the "Bull Pen" on different occasions. There was a band of thieves which operated between the Arkansas and Comanche Indian line. Bonner was a member of this gang. I remember one time especially when they brought him in with thirteen different indictments against him. The bond in each case was set at \$3500. Every week or so some member of the gang would drop around and go his bond on one of the charges. Immediately after bond was made; he was arrested on another charge. This kept going on for two or three months. One day Bonner

called to me and asked if I knew an Indian by the name of Jerome Whetsell. I told him I did, and asked if he lived near Madill. Bonner told me that whetsell's saddle animal had been stolen from him, and there had been a \$50 reward offered for its return. He also told me where the animal was and asked that I notify whetsell in order that I might get the reward. I wrote whetsell that afternoon and he came to the jail two days later. I told him where to go to find the animal. He didn't like it much because I didn't go after the animal myself. He left and returned four days later with the horse, and promised to mail me \$25.00 just as soon as he could get home and get the money. That afternoon Bonner cursed and said he would never mail it. About three days after this occurrence some of the rest of the Bonner gang came in and went all of the bonds. They were afraid Bonner would tell what he knew if they left him in jail, since he had told about the horse.

Bonner was later sentenced to the penitentiary for two years. After that he came back to Ardmore and gave up a good many of his old habits. He was killed about six years ago, out north of Ardmore. No one ever knew who shot him.

Another adventure I had was after I began work in Westheimer and Daube's department store. Bob Miller came in and had Sam Daube to cash a check for \$140 on a Duncan bank. After he left, Arthur Jones, the produce man across the street came in with a check Miller had given him for \$25.00. Jones had wired Duncan and found out that his check was no good, and was warning Daube. Daube called for Jim Chancellor, Chief of Police, and told us to go get the check. We went to a little tin building

which set back of where the Exchange National Bank is now located. We went in and found Miller and the other four members of his gang. I told him what I wanted. He gave me \$140.00 in cash. Chancellor told him to pay off the other check and get out of town. They were all five hung at Ada the next day for killing Gus Bobbett. Sherman Joiner and Bill Washington went up to other bond, but they were given a taste of the hanging, and told to get out of town within a hour.

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT  
in the Old Creek Nation  
Interview with Jacob Rolland (Uchee-Creek Indian)

Jacob Rolland, 56 years of age, of the Long Tiger band of Uchee-Creek Indians, lives near Kelleyville, Creek county, Oklahoma.

He recalls that in the old Indian times when the Indians of the Muskogee-Creek Nation had their own laws and government. The punishment for adultery or alienation of affections was cutting off of one ear close to his head.

Euchee Billy was the law enforcing officer. There was some one-eared Eucheers in those days.

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