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Goldie Turner, Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History  
April 21, 1937

Interview with Mrs. H. E. Root,  
Pawnee, Oklahoma, by Goldie Turner,  
Field Worker.

Mrs. Root was born in Kansas in 1855. She came to Oklahoma in 1896.

My husband and I came to Oklahoma in 1896. We came to the southern part of Pawnee County several miles northwest of Quay. My husband traded for a claim there. There was no house on it, only a dugout. It had split poles covered with hay and dirt for a roof but it did not leak, of course the floor was of dirt. We could sweep down the walls and the floor, gather up the loose dirt and our house cleaning was done. I was always afraid of finding snakes, centipedes, or tarantulas in it and was always looking for them but there were never any found. We only lived in it about three months before we got our frame house built. The dugout was a cool place to live though. We got our water from a spring close to the dugout. I was certainly led to get to move into the frame house. We lived on this claim four years then sold out and came to Pawnee.

We put in the Bon Ton grocery and restaurant. It was located on the street south and east of the court

house square. All of the buildings were built high off the ground and there were steps both in front and back of the buildings. The board sidewalks were laid on the ground and steep steps led from the walk to the entrances of the buildings. Our store was next door to the saloon run by Mr. Horton and it was not uncommon to see several drunk persons lying underneath the saloon. We only had the Lon Lon a year. We sold out and bought the Lawson hotel at Lawson (now Quay).

Lawson was named for the man whose farm was bought to establish the town when the railroad went through. This farm was in Payne County but across the road north was Pawnee county so the town is in both counties, the main street being the dividing line. Mr. Lawson established the hotel which we later bought. It, of course, was in Payne county. When the postoffice was established the name Lawson was so similar to Lawton that the name was changed to Quay. We also changed the name of the hotel to Quay hotel. We ran it for fifteen or sixteen years and during that time we had a very good business, many travelers stopping with us. In the earlier days members of the Bill Doolin gang often came there but they never caused us any trouble.

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The cave used by the Doolin gang is only a few miles north of Quay so the gang was often around. Bill Doolin was killed by the officers only a short distance west of our hotel.

We helped establish the little frame Christian Church in Quay which in early days served the country around.

On Sunday mornings lumber wagons loaded with people came in from all directions. We always had a good crowd. A year or so later the Methodist Church was built close by. They had a good congregation too. The congregations of both churches were made up mostly of country folks for the town never was large even after oil was discovered there.

We had an oil well, too, just back of the hotel but like most of the wells there, in a few years it was pumped

A year ago we decided we were getting too old to run the hotel so we rented it and came to Pawnee to live so we could be close to our daughters.

ROPER, H. C.

INTERVIEW

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Nettie Cain, Interviewer,  
July 12, 1937.

An Interview with H. C. Roper,  
Ada, Oklahoma.

H. C. Roper (white) was born October 14, 1858, in Hickman County, Kentucky. He came to the Indian Territory with Mrs. Roper, October 20, 1879, and located near Eufaula, living there several years.

Mr. Roper said in his experiences with the Indians he at all times found them true to their word.

Mr. and Mrs. Roper moved to Ada in 1896.

In December, 1879, two Indian boys by the name of Lincoln McGeeseey and Parmer Sampson planned to go to a white family's home by the name of Leard. They thought Mr. Leard was away from home, but to find out for sure they went to the house and asked to borrow Mr. Leard's saddle. Mrs. Leard told the boys that her husband was away from home and was riding on the saddle. That night the two Indian boys hid themselves in a rail fence corner and watched the house until after dark. The house was built on the old Indian style, one room being several feet from the other. The mother went from the big house to the kitchen and the Indians boys went into the big house and got Mr. Leard's shot gun. They went to the kitchen and

when they did Mrs. Leard ran out the door screaming, with her small baby in her arms. The boys shot her and she fell close to the house. Then the boys took the baby from her arms, threw it into the house on the bed, and badly abused Mrs. Leard. They left her in the yard all night. The hogs even came up and ate some of her flesh that night.

Her small children, four in all, the oldest being eight, stayed in the house all night alone. The next morning the children notified the closest neighbors. At first they thought the crime was for robbery. However, Mrs. Leard had about sixty dollars tied around her waist and the boys did not get it.

This took place on Thursday night and McGeesey was captured the following Sunday, near the Indian church. McGeesey denied everything, but he was held prisoner in the upstairs of a house under guard.

Another Indian boy was arrested, and he also denied all knowledge of the crime. Then he was told if he would tell where Simpson was they would release him. He told the guard that Simpson would kill him, but they assured him he would be safe. They made him go with them to Simpson's aunt, near Wewoka. When they reached the house, Simpson

was inside but wouldn't open the door. Sam Pryor then took a fence post and pushed the door down. Simpson was sitting there with his gun, but he didn't offer to use it, and when told they had come after him he surrendered his gun.

The mob put a chain around his neck and led him back to where the crime was committed. Mr. Roper led him, and he confessed everything to Mr. Roper.

Then the men told McGeesey that Simpson had confessed, and after they talked to each other in their own language they both confessed to the crime.

Their story corresponded with what the children had told. The two oldest children also identified the boys as the ones who came into the house that night with the gun.

Mr. Roper, Mr. Martin, and Sam Pryor, who was captain of the mob, were appointed to take the lead in the mob of about one hundred and fifty men.

Mr. Martin was the father of Mrs. Leard, and Mr. Leard and Mrs. Roper were first cousins.

After the boys confessed, they were taken and put on a chain, one on one end and one on the other. This was wrapped around a tree, and the brush from an old church arbor was used to burn them. There were three preachers in the mob, Reverend Butterfield, Reverend Hodge, and Reverend Guinn.

Reverend Hodge was called on to pray but he refused, saying he could not pray for them. Then a Mr. Mathis was called on



and he prayed for them. He was not a preacher but a very religious man. After he had finished the boys were given a chance to pray. They did, in their own language. They were burned near Maud, close to where they had killed the woman.

The Government then filed kidnapping charges against the mob. Nelson M. Jones, a United States Marshal, got twenty years and served his time at Jefferson City, Missouri. Andrew Mathis and Mont Ballard got ten years at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Sam Pryor and Bird Ivanhoe got three years at Leavenworth, Kansas, but only served twenty-one months. After he was sentenced he was given a leave of absence to go home and make his crop.

A reward of \$1000.00 was put up by the United States Government for the arrest of Sam Pryor, Bird Ivanhoe and C. H. Roper. Mr. Roper said about the hardest work he ever did was when he was scouting to keep from being arrested. Dick Cough, United States Marshal, took Roper to Muskogee to jail. He had wired ahead that he had three prisoners, Mr. Roper and two horse thieves, so he was met by other officers. Mr. Roper had asked the marshal to do him one favor and the Marshal had asked him what he wanted. Mr. Roper told him that he had a cousin living in Muskogee and he wanted the marshal to take him