

STEWART, FRANK

INTERVIEW

#8217

335

STEWART, FRANK, . . . INTERVIEW.

8217

Interviewer, Maurice R. Anderson,  
August 13, 1937.

Interview with Mr. Frank Stewart,  
Pauls Valley, Okla.

Born February 10, 1882.  
Indian Territory.

Parents C. F. Stewart, Indian Territory.  
Josephine Harris, Indian Territory.

---

I was born at Caddo, Indian Territory. My mother was a Chickasaw Indian, and my father was a Choctaw Indian.

My father, C. F. Stewart, owned the hotel and boarding house at Cherokee Town. There was an Indian school about six miles east and about a mile south of Pauls Valley. This school was called the Chikiki Indian school and a white woman named Mrs. Hotchkin taught.

The Government paid her eight dollars a scholar for schooling and boarding Indian children. I was not old enough to go to this school, but my brother went.

This school was closed in 1885 and Mrs. Hotchkin opened a school near Wynnewood in 1887. This school was for Indian children. My father was a deputy United States

---

STEWART, FRANK. . INTERVIEW.

8217

Marshal and he had a room in the hotel at Cherokee-town where he would keep prisoners overnight on his way to Fort Smith, Arkansas, and other United States Marshals have kept their prisoners there. This room was fixed with iron spikes driven into the floor and a ring was fixed on the end of the spike and when Father kept a prisoner there overnight he would put a log shackle on the prisoner and lock him to this ring on the floor or if it was in the summer time there was a big tree out in the yard of the hotel and my father would chain the prisoners to the tree.

The law was when he went after a man to bring him in dead or alive. Of course, he was supposed to bring the prisoner to court alive if he could but if he had to kill the prisoner then he had to bring the body into court.

I have heard him tell about several men whom he had to kill. He said in the early days there was a hotel at Whitehead Hill, about five miles west of Pauls Valley, and that on several trips to Whitehead he had stopped at this hotel and that <sup>on</sup> one of these trips he had met a young man about twenty-five years old.

STEWART, FRANK. . INTERVIEW.

8217

This young man had come to Whitebead two months before my father stopped there. This young man took care of the horse and helped around the hotel and that was the way my father became acquainted with him. This young man worked at the hotel a few months and left.

One day my father said he got a warrant from Fort Smith to bring in this man dead or alive because he had killed a man. My father said he went to Whitebead to get the young man but found he had left there and was working for a man on the river east of Pauls Valley.

Father said he liked this young man and hated to take him to Fort Smith so he sent Zack Gardner, who owned a grist mill on the river east of Pauls Valley, to tell this man to come to Cherokee-town and give himself up. Father said he thought this young man would leave the country and some other marshal would have to get him but the young man did not leave. Instead, he sent word to my father that he was not going to give himself up. My father said in those days when a man sent you word he was not going to give himself up, it meant that he was ready to shoot it out with you, so early the next morning my father saddled his horse

STEWART, FRANK. . INTERVIEW.

8217

and started over to where this young man was working.

Father wanted to get over there before this young man started to work for he knew he was going to have to shoot it out with him. Father got to the house about sunup and this man was sleeping on a cot out in the yard. It was in the summer time and Father rode up to the rail fence in front of the house, tied his horse and got his gun out of the holster and started over to where this young man was sleeping and when Father got within about twenty feet of the cot where the young man was, he slipped on a corn cob and fell causing the young man to wake up. Father told the man to put up his hands, instead the man brought up his pistol and began shooting.

This young man was not afraid but lying on the cot trying to shoot he missed and my father was kneeling down and this gave him the advantage so he was forced to kill the young man.

This was the only man Father killed while he was a deputy United States Marshal that he was sorry after he had killed him but it was a case of kill or be killed.

STEWART, FRANK. . INTERVIEW.

8217

Father said that he and the man this young man was working for built a box coffin out of some planks torn off of the barn and hauled the young man's body to Cherokee Town and loaded the coffin into a wagon and took it to Fort Smith and turned the body over to the court.

If an officer was forced to kill a wanted man, he had to take the remains to Fort Smith.

My mother could take corn and make several dishes out of it and they were good. She would parch corn and then put it in the old coffee grinder or in the mortar block and grind it up and this was a good breakfast cereal with milk and sugar over it. She had a square piece of tin with small holes punched in it and she would take corn before it was dry and grate it with this tin and make roasting ear bread, which is a fine dish when eaten with sweet milk.

My mother was a sister to Governor Harris, one-time governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

There was a ferry crossing one mile north of Pauls Valley on the Washita River. It worked on a large cable, which was fastened to a tree on each side of the river and the man who ran this ferry had a long pole with which he pushed

the ferry boat across the river. This ferry boat would hold several horses at one time and the man charged twenty-five cents for a wagon and team to cross.

In territory days if you wanted to build a ferry boat on the river and charge for taking people across you first had to get a grant or permit from the Chickasaw Government which would cost about two dollars and fifty cents.

Settlers coming into the Indian Territory had to pay five dollars a year permit to live here.

There was another ferry crossing at Cherokee town, it was run like the one north of Pauls Valley.

My grandfather, Wiley Stewart, came to the Choctaw Nation from Mississippi in 1848. He and two other men organized the first Masonic Lodge, which had the first charter to be issued in the Indian Territory.

If a white man wanted to marry an Indian woman it cost him fifty dollars for his license, which made him a citizen of the Choctaw or Chickasaw Nation.

Later, this price was raised to one thousand dollars and this increase in price stopped a lot of white men from marrying the Indian women.

STEWART, FRANK. INTERVIEW.

8217

The Indian law was that if an Indian committed a crime the first time, he would get one hundred lashes across his naked back and if he committed a second crime the penalty was death.

A day would be set for him to come in and die and he would be there on that day. The High Sheriff of the Indian court would have the prisoner stand up against a tree and sometimes the High-Sheriff would blindfold the prisoners and sometimes the men who were sentenced to die would not let the Sheriff blindfold them.

In this case they were counted brave men. Then the sheriff would paint a red cross over the heart of the men who were to be shot. I believe the man to be shot could pick someone to do the shooting but if he did not pick anyone then the High Sheriff had to do the shooting.

If the one doing the shooting missed then the prisoner went free. I think there were a few cases where the prisoner went free, but when the high sheriff did the shooting they never went free because he never did miss.

I now live in Pauls Valley.