

Field Worker: Amelia Harris  
April 16, 1937

BIOGRAPHY OF Mrs. John Rogers (White)  
Maiden name Laura Coal  
812 West 11th Street  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN Michigan  
July 28, 1877

PARENTS Father, Perry Case, Michigan  
Made the run in 1889  
Mother, Nanie Case, Michigan  
Pioneered in Oklahoma along by side  
of husband.

I was born in Michigan. When I was nine years old we moved to Edward County, Kansas, where we lived there two years. Dad's health was bad and he decided to go west. He had read so much about Oklahoma that he decided to make the run in 1889, which he did. He filed on 160 acres nine miles from Moore, Oklahoma. Then he returned for Mother and us children. We were all so enthused and happy, we could scarcely wait to get our things packed. We left Kansas, father, mother, six brothers, the hired man and my self. We were driving two wagons loaded with furniture and my brothers riding and driving ten horses and two cows. When we were almost ready to come, our neighbors, Ed. and Edison Perry, became so enthused they decided to come too. They had two wagons and some stock, which made quite a party of us Oklahoma bound.

We were thankful to have them along as we were about two weeks on the way. It rained on us and we would be detained by

high rivers or bad road. Our first stop was, Oklahoma City in a rooming house on Grand Avenue. Dad left mother and us children there, while he bought a tent and took the wagons and stock out to our new home. When he got things ready he drove one of the wagons back for us. On the way to our new home as we passed through the woods, we saw two of the prettiest cub bears playing, squirrels jumping from limb to limb, plenty of quail and other game and animals. I was just twelve years old but I remember vividly this trip, Everything was so different and so new to me. I kept my head stuck out of the wagon in "wild eyed" amazement.

We lived in our tent about two weeks, long enough for Dad to build a long house out of native lumber it was about 50 feet long as Dad intended to use part for a corn crib. We lived in this house four months; then Dad built a frame house, large enough to accommodate his family. He used part of this long building for a General merchandise store and the rest of the building for a corn crib. He shipped a carload of corn and a carload of groceries, dry goods, and some hardware from Missouri, to Moore. Then hauled them out to "Case", as a postoffice was established here now. They named it after

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my father. This postoffice is one and a half miles of what is now known as Nuralla.

Dad ran this general merchandise store, including farm implements, had the post office and wrote the pension claims for the Shawnee Indians. He improved his farm too: he was a busy man but he had a big family and plenty of help. My mother helped in the store, besides cooking, washing, ironing and making beds for nine people.

When my oldest brother, Dayton, was 21 years old Dad secured a mail route for him from Moore to Tecumseh. The following little towns were on this route; Moore, Stella, Linden, Slusher and Tecumseh. Brother had this route about six months when he took the pneumonia; then I had to fill his job. I rode sideways with a long black riding skirt on. I rode brother's saddle as I had to tie some of the mail on to the saddle. Some in mail bags tied to the back of his saddle. It was bitter cold many times and I would almost freeze, but we had to have the money to feed our big family, and improve the farm. We did not realize much from our grocery store. The people were so poor in our neighborhood that we did a lot of trading. Groceries for axes, hoes, and rake handles, or for hogs or beef meat.

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We would bring a wagon load of these handles to Oklahoma City and trade them to Petty Hardware Company for what we needed in hardware. Then back home to trade again.

The Shawnee Indians were our best pay when they got their pension of \$30.00 per month. Most of it was spent at our store. Some of it went for whiskey, some for medicine but they thought a great deal of Dad. He did what he could to help them in many ways and if it had not been for their money we could not have run the store.

There was a thieving set of poor white people that kept up a disturbance. One in particular, named Jim Crossland, stole a hog and butchered it and brought it to our store and traded it for merchandise. We found out later that it belonged to either Ayers, Stringer, Fergus or Thompson, as they were the four men out hunting the thief. They came to Jim Lyons' house (he was a brother-in-law to Jim Crossland, the real thief). Lyons was up on top of his house nailing clapboard shingles on. They asked if he had seen anybody driving a pair of mules hitched to a wagon. He replied "Yes, I saw Isom Williams, a negro, driving a mule team. Williams was going home". The men went to Isom's home and nearly frightened him to death, flourishing their pistols and Winchesters. He soon convinced

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them it was not he. In the meantime Jim Lyons come over to our store hunting for his brother-in-law (Jim Crossland) to warn him, as he knew he had stolen the hog. Crossland was not at our store then. These four men came back by the store and asked if we had bought any meat. Dad said "Yes, my wife bought a hog this morning", and added that it was on a table in the back room (where we kept the meat). They went back and looked at the hog and said it was theirs. The men asked who mother bought the hog from. Mother did not want to cause trouble so she said she did not know. They went back in the front part of the store and saw Lyons sitting on the counter. Some one of them said, "You dirty--, you lied about the negro. We know you stole our hog," and one of them shot him with a Winchester. Then the four men whirled around and left. Mr. Lyons fell forward on the floor, mother run to him and put his head in her lap. Dad sent to Norman, nine miles from us, for a doctor but Lyons was dead before the doctor got there.

Dad and I were busy making out the pensions and issuing groceries to the Indians, is how it happened that mother bought the hog. When the men started shooting, the Indians

started running. Some crawled behind the counters, one Indian called "Pecan" started to jump in the well, but Brother caught him and got him quiet. My little brother had a play house built of goods boxes, one Indian ran under this and started walking around, the play house only came to his waist. Most of the Indians jumped on their horses and went home, forgot their groceries and pension. Mr. Lyons' body lay on the counter, covered by a sheet, that night and until four o'clock the next day, when his people came for his body and buried it. Some one took the sheet off his body and hung it on the door. That night the Indians came back for their groceries. I got some matches to go in the store and light the lamp. I unlocked the door and threw it wide open, stepping on the inside and striking a match. About that time a gust of wind flopped up that white sheet that was hanging on the door. Those Indians gave one yell and jumped off the front porch which was three feet high, and away they went home. We did not see them any more for a week. These four men were arrested, stood trial and came clear. An innocent man was killed but nothing was ever done about it.

Our amusements were not much, Sunday school, Church

or a picnic. Dad always donated a beef and a hog and some flour for the picnics; the neighbor men barbecued the meat and the women took the flour and made cakes and pies and sometimes light bread. Then we had red lemonade and square dancing. One 4th of July Dad got a telephone pole and had it polished slick, then greased it, and put a \$1.00 bill on top. This was the prize for any boy who could climb the pole. A white boy by the name of Buck Boucher tied a curry comb on the inside of each leg, concealed by his pants and started climbing up the pole, he got almost to the top. The crowd grew suspicious and rocked him down and discovered the curry combs. When this boy was grown he turned out to be a holy roller preacher.

We went to several Indian (Chawnee) Stamp dances at "Big Jim Crossing" on the Canadian. They would build five fires. This was to drive the evil spirits away. The men did the dancing, dressed in colored shirts and tight breeches on leggings, with beaded moccasins and a bright shawl over all this regalia. They would weave in and out of these fires, chanting and rattling gourds filled with buck shot and beating Tom-Toms. The women gathered in a bunch and

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quietly shuffled their feet to the music. They always finished these dances with a barbecue and some kind of Indian dishes.

When the Indians died, they would build a scaffold in the highest tree they could find. This scaffold was built by laying logs across the limbs, they would place their dead up there. They would stack their dead up on this scaffold as long as it stayed there, the buzzards ate their dead. Something happened to their scaffold, the wind had blown it down or it had rotted, anyway it was not there when an Indian name Kaska died of pneumonia. So the Shawnee Indians built a log house about four feet high and sat Kaska up in the corner, put his saddle behind him and put food around him, a big bowl of cooked corn in his lap with a spoon in it. He got to smelling so bad that the Indians left their home and went down to the river and camped. We knew this Indian Kaska well as we wrote his pension out every month.

Father finally quit the store business and went into the nursery business, he put out 6000 fruit trees in the fall of 1898. He also put out grape and all kinds of berry vines. He got buds from California, Florida and Michigan and grafted on some of his peach trees. This was known as the big orchard.

Father had salesmen all over the state of Oklahoma selling his nursery stock. This was hard work for all of us and finally Father decided he was too old for such hard work. In 1909 he sold out for a good price and moved to Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.