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Chauncey O. Moore, Supervisor  
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

March 29, 1937

James R. Carseloway  
Research Field Worker

Interview: Harry J. Campbell  
Vinita, Oklahoma

My name is Harry J. Campbell. I was born at Williamsport, Pennsylvania on October 25, 1868. I came to the Indian Territory in 1892 and stayed a year with my father who had homesteaded and built a house on his land twelve miles north of Oklahoma City, where he resided until he was too old to farm.

I came to Vinita on the 6th day of June, 1893 and went to work in the livery stable of Couch & Raines, then located on the east side of the M. K. & T. track, the first place north of the old stone building built by Johnson Thompson. The Thompson building was made of native stone and was two stories high. He conducted a store on the ground floor and the Masonic Lodge met in the upper story. It was built in 1872 and was the first stone or brick building to be built in the village then called Downingsville.

Prior to 1896, the masons built themselves a two story frame building at 120 South First Street, now known as the Sequoyah Hotel. The upper story which had been occupied by them in the Thompson building was rented to G. F. Clark, who opened a Business College, I think in 1896. Clark was a hustler and soon had the entire upper story swarming with students from all over Eastern Oklahoma. I am told that he had as high as 350 students at one time. There was nothing but a board fence between the livery stable and the school and I could hear the typewriters clicking from where I was at work. We had an old Jack that walked up and down the high board fence between the barn and school and he always acted as tho he wanted to get over there. He kept this up so much that the penmanship teacher drew a picture of him standing on his hind legs with his front feet over the high board fence and underneath the picture, he said, "Going to Clark's Business College"

Started work at 50 cents a day

Labor was cheap those days. I started work for Couch and Rains in 1893 at 50 cents per day and boarded myself, but at the end of the first month they raised me to \$20.00 per month and furnished me a house to live in and in six months they raised me to \$40.00 per month and I worked for them at that price until I had saved enough to set myself up in farming.

Moves to farm near Vinita.

In 1902 I left the livery barn and rented a farm six miles west of Vinita and after statehood bought a farm in the Shanahan District, where I lived until 1923, when I ran for sheriff on the Republican ticket and was elected. I then moved to Vinita and took charge of the sheriff's office on January 3, 1923. I was re-elected for a two year term and again for a four year term, which gave me the office for eight years.

During my terms of office, I caught twenty-one bank robbers, twenty of whom were convicted and sent to the penitentiary. Most of these outlaws were wanted in other counties. Some of the outlaws caught, who were wanted for crimes in this county were, Dick (Allison) Ivey, Richard Burks, who was electrocuted for killing Frank Pitts, cashier of the Ketchum, Oklahoma bank, while attempting to rob it, Raymond Thompson and Chester Dykes. There were three in the Ketchum bank robbery and we caught them all the next day, without firing a shot, except a stray shot, and that furnished enough fun to pay for all the excitement we went through. I had taken a full-blood Indian with me to work out the inside of a field, near Ketchum and sent W. J. Schuth of Welch with a bunch of men around the road in a car. The weeds were just about as high as our heads and we were naturally afraid that one of the bank robbers would bob up, most any minute, and begin shooting, when all at once Schuth let his rifle go off accidentally as he climbed out of the car and we heard the bullet whiz past us. We both dropped to the ground in the high weeds and the Indian looked over at me and said, "Guess

kill it right here, ain't it?"

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Sam Ridenhour, one of the deputies, who caught one of the robber, had practically the same experience. He was searching another pasture out near the graveyard at Vinita and was all alone with the weeds about up to his head, when a hog heard him coming and began moving away from him. He couldn't see a thing, but the weeds shaking, and was following after it just about as fast as he could and he said he was already so shaky he didn't know whether he could have pulled the trigger or not, if he had been forced to shoot, when all at once one of the robbers jumped up with his hands in the air and said, "Don't shoot me, Sam, I'll give up".

Married in 1889, in Missouri

I was married at Butler, Missouri, to Maggie DeMott, on November 3, 1889.

To this union two boys and four girls were born. They are:

Dollie G  
Gladys  
Grace  
Helen  
Harry Lee  
Carl.

While I was sheriff of Craig County, I purchased a home at 509 South Scrapper Street, in Vinita and after retiring from the sheriff's office, we moved back to my farm in the Shanahan District and lived there two years. In 1932 and 1933, when Pretty Boy Floyd was at his highest stage of operation, he was heard of as having spent two days in Vinita at one of the leading hotels, supposedly looking the First National Bank over with a view of robbing it. The bank heard of it, after he was gone and put on a guard. I went to work there the fifth day of March, 1933 and have been with them four years and no one has ever come to rob the bank but I find plenty to do just the same and the bank officials are going to keep a guard right on to protect the people's money.

I have moved back to my Vinita property and live at 509 South Scrapper St.,  
Vinita, Oklahoma