

GUIN, JIM

INTERVIEW

13806

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**#13908**

BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name     **Melvin Stites**      
This report made on (date)     **May 8,**         **8**      
    **193**    

1. Name     **Jim Guin**      
2. Post Office Address     **Hanna, Oklahoma**      
3. Residence address (or location)     **Two miles west; 1/2 mile south**      
4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month     **November**     Day     **8,**     Year     **1893**      
5. Place of birth     **Near Mollette, Oklahoma**    

6. Name of Father     **George Guin**     Place of birth     **Near Mammoth**      
    **Kentucky.**      
7. Name of Mother     **Leatha Reeves**     Place of birth     **Missouri.**    

Other information about mother     **Lived most of her childhood**      
    **in houseboats on Mississippi.**    

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached     **10**    .

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Investigator,  
Melvin Stites,  
May 2, 1933.

Interview with Jim Guin  
Hanna, Oklahoma

I was born in 1893 on the Louis Smith allotment near Mellette, in the Creek Indian Nation. However, my first childhood recollections center about Raiford where we lived. I remember sitting at the side of the road in order to watch the United States "laws" pass by with their "Snake" Indian prisoners, who were being taken to Eufaula. Ours was a farming family.

"Snake" Indians is the name applied to those who practiced the philosophy of Chitto "Crazy Snake" Harjo, Creek Indian-warrior-statesman. He fought against the law of the white man; he was the leader of several rebellions, the last in 1907. It was in some of the earlier uprisings that these "Crazy Snake" Indians, who often had more negro blood than Indian, spoken of in the opening chapter, were captured.

Speaking of "Crazy Snake" Indians, my uncle Bill, Father's brother, married into the Creek Indian tribe. Of this union Ivory Guin was born, in 1898; and was put on the roll for allotment the same year. His mother

died shortly after his birth.

One day in the late Summer of 1903, Dad and Uncle Bill decided to cut the tall grass to be found on Uncle Bill's son's allotment. Uncle Bill's son was named Ivory. This grass was to be used as hay. It so happened that Ivory's allotment was near Hickory Ground. This ground was situated near the small town of Salem and was at that time headquarters for the "Crazy Snake" outfit and it was later made the Creek Capital by "Crazy Snake" Chitto Harjo. Uncle and Dad, after making the trip had but little time that first day to mow hay. They made camp in a small woodland and used their wagon to sleep under.

The first night they were startled to hear the zing of buckshot uncomfortably near, in fact a bullet went into their camp fire. They jumped to their feet, ran a short distance and hid behind trees.

Soon about ten negro "Snake" Indians on horses entered the circle of their camp fire. One of these negroes sang out: "Hello, white man! We burn you before day." The savages started dancing about the fire, yelling and gobbling as they did so. This commotion summoned other "Crazy Snake"

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Indians from Hickory Ground. My dad and uncle heard them swiftly approach on horses. They didn't have anything but an old muzzle loaded gun to stand off their foes, so they decided the best thing to do was to retreat. This they did. They went to the home of a friendly Indian of the name of Billy Cheeks. He lived on the North Canadian about four miles from the place of attack.

The next morning Dad and Uncle Bill returned to their camp, got their wagon and team and came back home.

In the Spring of 1898 there was committed near the present site of Maud, (there was but one store there then) one of the most ghastly murders in Territorial history, one in which C. M. Barnes, our fourth Territorial Governor and John Brown, Chief of the Creek-Seminole Tribe, had to take a hand.

But to start at the beginning:

The Leards--Mrs. Leard was the victim--lived in the Seminole country three miles east of the present site of Maud. The line that separated "Old" Oklahoma from the Indian Territory ran north and south through the

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neighborhood where Maud is now located. On the immediate east side of the line was located the Seminole country and to the immediate west "old" Oklahoma.

We lived just a short distance on the "old" Oklahoma side three miles south of the present site of Maud.

Grandpap Guin, my grandfather, whose home figures in this story, lived about one quarter of a mile to the west of us.

The Leard home consisted of two one-room houses built in the fashion of that day. One house was made of logs daubed with red mud. The other one-room house was made of boards with a porch. The Leards had four children, the oldest of whom was Frankie, age seven. Mr. Julius Leard was away at the time of the murder of his wife; the children were the only eye witnesses to the actual crime. It was up to Frankie to identify the murderers.

The Leard hired hand had been away from the Leard household for several hours and on his return a horrible sight met his eyes. In the yard lay the body of Mrs.

Leard with swine feeding on her body. The Leard hired hand notified the neighbors. Just on the inside of the door of the board room house lay Mrs. Leard's nine weeks old baby almost dead. It was quite evident that the baby was dying from a fall. Under a pile of newly washed clothes one of the other children was found. Frankie, aged seven, was found wandering about in the near-by woods. The neighbors questioned him and from his answers the manner in which the crime was committed took shape.

Some time during the early part of the morning, Frankie related, Lincoln McKeesy and Palmar Sampson, both of whom he knew by face and name, came up to his mother who was washing clothes at the board room house. The two Seminole Indians wanted to borrow Mr. Leard's saddle. Mrs. Leard informed them that her husband was away and that he had the saddle with him. The Seminoles left, only to return about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. It is more than likely their departure that morning had been in anger. When Mrs. Leard saw them returning, she rushed into the house and

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grabbed up a shot gun. When the two men came to the door, she tried to shoot them, but luck was against her. The gun jammed. She threw it to the floor, grabbed up her baby and ran out into the yard. The two Indians gave pursuit. Lincoln caught up with Mrs. Leard and with the stock of the shot gun which she had thrown down, knocked her senseless. Lincoln then jerked the baby free of her arms and threw it up over the porch in through the doorway of the room where it was found, dying. Lincoln walked over to the porch on which Frankie was standing. The criminal held up a booted foot and asked Frankie if he recognized the boots. Frankie didn't recognize them. It is an act of Providence that he failed to recognize them. By recognizing them he would have more than likely been killed because the boots belonged to his father and had been stolen by Lincoln McKeesy while the outlaws headed farther back into the Seminole country. Frankie tried to drag the body of his mother into the house. Such was the manner of the crime.

Word was gotten to Mr. Leard, who was over in the Chickasaw Nation at the time. Sixty men--sympathizers



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from the Chickasaw Nation, came with him to his home and several posses were organized. The Pottawatomie Indians joined the white men and Chickasaw Indian posses. One such posse headed by Mr. Leard and of which my uncle, Russ Guin, was a member, gave chase in the Seminole country, after two Seminoles on horseback who appeared over anxious to get away. My uncle shot the horse out from under one of them and the other Seminole made his escape. The posse asked the captured Indian where Lincoln McKeesy could be found. The sulky Seminole wouldn't talk. However, the posse had a remedy for that. They hanged him by the neck. Nevertheless, before he would become senseless they would let him to the ground to give him an opportunity to talk. He talked. He said Lincoln McKeesy could be found at a nearby Indian Mission.

The posse found Lincoln boldly walking about the mission. The collar of his shirt was open and blood could still be seen on his under-clothing. The posse threw their guns on him and made him mount. They took him to my grandfather's house to which place the Leard

children had been taken. Frankie identified McKeesy as one of the murderers. The criminal was chained in the loft of Grandpap Guin's house.

The next day another posse caught Palmar Sampson near Eufaula.

The moment the two (Lincoln and Palmar) were brought face to face, they started quarreling. Palmar, who spoke better English than did McKeesy, was asked what they were quarreling about. Palmar said Lincoln was accusing him of killing Mrs. Leard.

By the next day excitement was at a feverish heat. The women wanted to burn the Indians at the stake. The men wouldn't let them. However, on the third day after the crime, the men took the two Seminoles to a near-by Stomp Ground. There, with a chain several feet in length, they shackled the two Seminoles to two trees. Bush was taken from an arbor and piled about them. Mrs. Leard's father, Mr. Martin, was privileged to set fire to the brush. The moment the brush around Lincoln McKeesy burst into flame, he leaped into it, but Palmar pulled away as long as he could. Some of the spectators

shot their guns into the air, many of them turned their backs to the grim spectacle and several tried to leave, but there were men to make them remain.

Almost at the instant the fire was lit six United States laws from Muskogee rode up. They had been sent by Governor Barnes who in turn had been notified by an Indian preacher of the pending tragedy. The "laws" were disarmed and detained but as soon as the burning was over, they were given their guns and permitted to return to Muskogee. However, several days later they came back with warrants for the arrest of all who had taken part in the burning.

I remember one United States Marshal, Heck Thomas by name, coming to our house in search of Papa. Papa would always be hidden in the loft of our house, or elsewhere. However, three of my uncles were not so lucky. They served jail sentences. As far as I know, only one man, Mont Ballard, received a prison sentence.

Through the Summer and up into late November rumors came into "Old" Oklahoma that the Seminoles,

angered by the fate of two of their number, were preparing for the warpath. But, so were the white men, with the Pottawatomie Indians as their aids. All the guns and ammunition was gotten ready for use. The men stayed in groups at various houses. However, for the most part, they slept on the outside; the women and children occupying the indoors. I remember one November night of that year (1898) a light snow fell on those of us who were sleeping in the yard. That month of November signs of border warfare reached their climax. Reports had it that six or seven hundred Seminoles stood equipped for battle. However, before they could swing into action, John Brown, the Seminole-Creek Chieftain, from his home (Capitol) at Seminole came to the Indian encampment west of Wewoka. He didn't say much but what he did say was to the point. In effect it was, "If you go over there into Oklahoma you'll be killed by the whites. If any of you come back alive, I'll see that you are killed. Take your choice; it's death either way, if you strike." The Indians disbanded.