

WARD, LEROY

INTERVIEW

#7781

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Interviewer, Grace Kelley,  
October 9, 1937.

Interview with Leroy Ward,  
Henryetta, Oklahoma.

~~Lern~~ January 25, 1899

Parents Lois Ward, near Bloomer, Ark.  
Dora Morc, Arkansas.

My mother's people were Choctaws but they stopped at Walnut Tree, Arkansas, when they were driven from their homes. A lot of Indians were killed there because they would not go any farther. They thought it was a disgrace to come here by being driven like cattle, as they were.

Sage Garland was Mother's cousin and he started an Indian village where he was bringing the Indians together to become civilized but my mother's people said that they were already civilized and did not need his assistance nor any assistance from the Government. The village was later called Garland's Stand and was six and three quarters of a mile from Tamaha.

In 1891, when Mother was thirteen her family came into the Choctaw Nation.

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## Allotment, 1907.

My great-aunt Molly Morc made a tour and visited her whole family of relation and told them not to allot, that they were able to make their own living without the help of the Government.

Grandfather's mother was a Garland. Sage Garland made two trips out to see if we wanted to allot as he could take it over Molly Morc's head if we wanted to. I was eight years old at that time. My step-father, E. M. Longstreath, said he thought we should take the allotment but we never did.

We moved to the Cherokee Nation to keep from allotting and Grandfather quit writing to all the relations who allotted. He and his people had pulled away from the Choctaw Tribe on account of the treatment and abuse of the Government as they had signed three treaties but had been driven back and back until they did not want anything to do with the Government nor with anyone who had anything to do with the Government.

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## Civil War.

The Civil War caused some of the Morcs to change their names. Grandfather Henry changed his name from Morc to Morse and he fought on both sides. He was heading for the Northern Recruiting Office when he was conscripted for the Southern side and served on the Southern side for eighteen months. During a battle, a friend slipped him a Northern suit. He always called it his stolen suit and he fought for three hours on the Northern side. Three days later he was signed in at Little Rock and went out scouting with a dozen men and that was his business for the rest of the War. The reason he wanted to fight on the Northern side was because he had a brother who was mean to his negroes and Grandfather Henry knew that his brother would have to release his slaves if the North won the war. Grandfather Henry is buried in the Blaine Odd Fellows' Cemetery.

Henry Morse's brother, Jim Moss, fought on the Northern side all the way through the war for the same reason and is buried in the Danville, Arkansas, Cemetery.

~~Great-uncle John Moss was more of a bushwhacker than anything else. None of the Choctaw families went to his~~

funeral on account of his actions during the war. They had had nothing to do with him while he lived.

Chitto Harjo.

Chitto Harjo started complaining about the Indians accepting the acreage allotment. He wanted the whites to come in and develop the country and then move out leaving the country to the Indians. In 1884, he met the United States Senators at Tulsa Town and said he would accept allotment if the land was not deeded. If the land was allotted to the Indians and not deeded, it could not be taxed nor sold. In that way it would be of no use to anyone but the Indians. He wanted ground left for the towns and villages, too. Chitto Harjo was smart and was qualified to talk in almost any language.

He was against the Dawes Commission and in 1899 he organized a council and was going to make the non-citizens move out of the country when he saw fit. He made tours to keep in contact with his five thousand members. His strongest followers were from Deep Fork country. There were some from most of the tribes but none from the Osages.

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George Eursary and Elec McCoy were Cherokee partners and ruled right along with Harjo. They had long black braids. Somebody got them into the court house to buy cattle. There were barbers and chairs in the court house and they were told that if they did not sign the allotment the barbers would cut their hair off. They were scared until they signed, then the younger Indians or follower of them signed, too. That was in Sallisaw.

Choctaws Robert McElvaina and Kiley McElvaina were forced in a similar way at Talihina. Later, they were made Deputy U. S. Marshals out of Muskogee and had their hair cut of their own accord.

U. S. Marshals.

Bob Killingsworth was the leader of all the United States Marshals and he is a hundred and five years old if he is still living. He was living last year at Hitchita.

One man was an outlaw and when the Government sent word that the ones who came in and promised to turn away from being outlaws would be given pardons; this man came in and was made a marshal. Mr. Killingsworth would go out without

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a gun to talk the men into coming in for this pardon. Lots came of their own accord and as far as I know made good citizens.

#### First Wire Fence.

This fence started at the Spaulding bridge. It was first a ford, then a ferry, and then a bridge, which crossed the Arkansas River near Muskogee and went east and west to a place just east of the Creek Orphans' Home or school at Okmulgee. There was a district fence here to keep the cattle from roaming too far.

Whenever a white man married an Indian he was allowed to fence wherever he wanted and his fence was not bothered but if he was not married to an Indian his fences would be cut and ruined.

#### Mail.- Star Route.

Mrs. Gibson's husband was a mail carrier and when he died she carried the mail for the rest of the term. Mun Whitecotton was her bondsman. The route was from Okmulgee to Sharp and Jeness.

#### Jeness.

Jeness was a half mile south of the Wilson School and was named for the first and oldest resident who owned

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the store where the post office was. Westfall owned it later. There was a store and post office and grist mill from 1907 to 1911 at Jeness.

#### Water Wells.

Water wells were drilled for most everyone on Honey Creek, Salt Creek and Four Mile Creek by William Perry Pound. He had been a cowboy from Texas and a law officer before he came here.

#### Indian ways.

Alec Thompson was one of the Snake Indians and very treacherous. We were the only whites who could get along with him. My father kept whiskey for medicine and to give to the Indians as a peace offering. He put what he thought Alec could drink without getting too much in a bottle and hid the rest. When Alec drank that and asked for more he told him it was all gone but there would be more next week. Alec would leave and not come back for a week then he would come back and ask for whiskey.

His nephew was an invalid for nineteen years with tuberculosis. Alec took good care of the boy and loved him all that time. Everything a person owned, Government pay



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off, allotment and personal belongings, went to the family with whom the person was living when he died. The nephew got worse and Alec sent word for his relatives to come and see him before it was too late. When they came they brought an ambulance to take him to the Muskogee Hospital. Alec shot and killed the boy before they could get him into the ambulance. If he had died at the hospital his belongings would have gone to the relatives who put him in the hospital. Alec was given a sentence of three years and six months but the Government Agent got him out.

Alec had his horses in a big corral and would get in there with a whip and then whip them until they were ready to stampede, open the gate and turn them loose on the pasture. Then he would run after them on foot and lasso one. When he got on it, if it did not buck with him, he would not go to town. If the horse bucked Alec went to town expecting good luck.

The Lizzie Brown Eating-house at Okmulgee.

Lizzie brown was Bill Morton's aunt and she had an eating-house at the southeast corner from the Council House. The path went from the Council House to the well.

and then on to her eating house. She served Indian dishes of wild game and corn, etc. That was in 1892. She lived neighbors with her for a long time.

When Lizzie Lrown came to our house she never disturbed us by knocking but stood around in the yard until someone noticed her and asked her to come in. Sometimes she would stay all night with us and as soon as she heard us stirring around in the morning she would get up and slip out and go home. Sometimes we would watch for her when she came out of the house and ask her to stay for breakfast but she would decline at first, saying that she would have to go feed the dog or do some other chore but when we insisted she would eat with us.

Her home was a four-room house, which was rented out and a two-room house was built for her to live in so that she could be close to her husband's grave. The new house was about a hundred feet or less from his grave. She was a good and intelligent Indian; she was blind for four years before her death.

Lone Wolf Crossing on the Santa Fe Trail.

The Lone Wolf Crossing was between Osage and Kay Counties on the south side of the bend, near Oxbowl Bend

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where the Arkansas River turns south. The Sante Fe Trail crossed there instead of crossing the notorious prairie and went into the rough woods for protection.

#### Crossing on Arkansas River.

There was another ford to the Osage side on the north side of the bend coming from Wash Unger's Indian village.

Wash Unger's village and school.

This school was one of the biggest Indian schools and was established by the Indians for convenience but was acknowledged by the Government.

There was another school six and three quarters miles north and west of Wash Unger's. It was the school of the Kaw Indians. They never had any land but really belonged to the Osage Tribe. They were warriors of the Osages and were called after the village of Kaw. White Horse was a messenger to the Kaws from the Osages. Fred Lookout is their Chief now. He kindled a fire in 1854 to bring rain and did get moisture but not a real rain.

#### Sharp Cemetery.

A quarter mile north of where Sharp stands and a half mile east is a cemetery where they buried Indians, whites and

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negroes.

## Old Cussetah Burying Ground.

Over the Hugh Henry Hill on Third Street, Henryetta, three and a half miles north at the foot of a hill, are three graves with stone houses which are falling in. Lessie Hall's father, Judge Downing, is buried there.

## Two Starr Graves; Belle's — Henry's.

The Saddlehorn rock cave on Greenwood crossing on the North Canadian belonged to Henry Starr and his brother and is not Belle Starr's cave. The brother was killed in the mouth of this cave and this killing caused Henry to turn outlaw. The brother had been innocent of any crime.

Belle Starr's cave was up the river on the South Canadian River on Younger Bend, fourteen miles north and three miles east of Quinton. It faces up river northwest. The opening of the cave is as big as a room and a person at the house across the river could guard it. The house belonged to Belle Starr too. There is a seven and a half foot tombstone to her grave across the river from the cave on her allotment. One of her share-croppers, who was one of her gang for she didn't do business with an out-

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sider, killed her.

She had been in the habit of having someone put in a share crop and when the work was done she would run him off and take the whole crop. This man would not run. Belle had tried to get him to leave and had told him he had better be gone when she got back that night. He was on the road at nine o'clock the next morning, shot her and she fell from her horse.

Some people think she was killed in the Stairstep Mountains but she was not. She was wounded but caught the collar of a bell-horse and rode it down and out of the mountains. Eleven horses followed the bell-horse and I figure they protected her from the officers like breast-work. Later, the officers found a new made grave and said it was the grave of Belle Starr.

#### Original Ozark Trail.

The original Ozark Trail went from Springfield, Missouri, to Tahlequah, to Fort Gibson where the two trails crossed, to Muskogee to the 266 Highway east of Henryetta, crossed by ferry at El Reno, went to Sayre and into the Texas Panhandle.

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## Branch of Ozark Trail.

This branch crossed the original trail at Fort Gibson and also the Grand River by the Spaulding Ferry at Fort Gibson, went on to Boynton, Okmulgee, west to Nuyaka to the No. 11 Highway, crossed the Deep Fork River at Sharp, passed the Wilson School to Ninth Street, Henryetta, and I believe went down the Rainbow Highway to Hanna, Atoka, and crossed the South Canadian at Francis and on into Texas.

## Santa Fe Trail.

This was called Whiskey Route from Joplin to Dewar. From Joplin to Bartlesville, south to a mile east of Lighthouse, which is Earnsdall now, to Avant, Skiatook, Tulsa, south to Okmulgee, took the river route east of Okmulgee at a crossing by Coalton bottoms and crossed Coal Creek a mile and a half south of Coalton on Buffalo Crossing where there was a sycamore tree. (This tree was spared in the Anti-Malaria WPA Project), west between the creek and mountain and it followed the bench of the mountain west around the point and climbed the edge and it was hard for the creek was close, then by the No. 5 and No. 6 mines at Dewar. Through Henryetta, Springhill, Ada, crossed at Lawton when going to the

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old Fort, from Ada it crossed at Greenwich when going into Texas.

#### Hell's Half Acre.

The Whiskey Trail was named for a notorious whiskey peddler, Clarence Roper and went to a place called Hell's Half Acre.

Cherokee Nell had a dive there and there were two or three hundred tents there. The ground is owned by Judge Mayes of Okmulgee now. Many people were traced that far and no farther. All the corrupt men and women of the towns congregated there. A family named Johnson lives on Cherokee Nell's place now. There was an old bridge a half mile south of the new bridge on Coal Creek on the Main Ozark Trail that was called Hold Up Bridge and it deserved this name.

The Government sent men in here to clean this place out but could do nothing as the ones who could tell what they needed to know were afraid of the officers. Wiley Melton cleaned it up with the help of Cherokee Nell as she would trust him and tell him the truth when she would not tell outsiders.

## Ozark and Santa Fe Cattle Trails Crossed.

These two trails crossed a mile east of where Sharp is now or where the old Sharp was. There is an old embankment there where the mill pond was, (seven to ten men worked in the mill and about twenty-five done the logging). Two hundred yards north is where Loti Tiger's Clan Town was. This clan town was named Mufaula town. Loti Tiger made a move to get recognized by the Government and wanted to get civilized before they all got killed off. He accepted all colors into his organization. Garland came in with him. (In other words he was for allotment and advancement where Chitto Harjo was against them).

## Old battleground. Indians in Arkansas.

During the Civil War the Indian Territory Indians had a battle three miles west of Knoxville on the Henneson-Gerring farm. Skeletons and bones were brought into the River Mountain store where I saw them. It must have been a big battle.

## Ferries.

Summers' ferry at Webbers Falls was run by Mother's cousin.



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Spaulding Ferry was at Fort Gibson.

Graveyard.

A mile and a half northwest of Schuler in a field was  
a big Indian cemetery.