

WOODY, STEPHEN A.

INTERVIEW.

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Field Worker: Amelia Harris
 March 13, 1937

STORY OF Stephen A. Woody, (White)
 417 West 10th Street
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN De Lonaga, Georgia
 December 10, 1869

PARENTS Father, J.C. Woody, Georgia
 Mother, Rosie Woody, Georgia

STEPHEN A. WOODY, Historical places and happenings.

QUOTE

There were many hide outs for outlaws in the Wichita mountains, near Lawton, in 1894, near a little postoffice called Meers, Oklahoma. (This was at the edge of the mountains), The outlaws had dug out hiding places all through these mountains.

An old miner came across one of these hide outs, began digging around and found a little gold. The news spread like fire, soon the mountains were full of prospectors, filing claims, sinking shafts and digging every where.

The first miner, who discovered the gold, went to Chicago and formed a Company, who shipped a carload of machinery, smelters and so forth, to the little town of Manitou, Oklahoma.

This Company prospected for gold about three years, they found gold but not in paying quantities, and they finally quit.

The town of Meers was on the boundary line between Comanche county on the north and Tilman county on the south, Main street was on the county line.

I was Deputy Sheriff, at Lawton, during this time

and went to the little town of Meers, to arrest a white man who stole a fine gold watch from Dr. Williams, of Lawton, (which was in Comanche county). The man who stole the watch was on the south side of the street in Tillman county. I could not arrest him until he came on my side of the street, in Comanche county, which he finally did. I arrested him and found him wearing the watch. He confessed and was sent to prison for three years.

During my deputy-ship in Lawton we heard three outlaws were headed for Oklahoma via Wichita mountains. Two of these men were the Martin brothers, noted desperadoes, and it seems like the third man's name was Spencer. Three Government men had trailed these outlaws from Wyoming, through Colorado, into Oklahoma.

The news spread about them being headed for Oklahoma and officers from all over the state were there. C. C. Hammonds was Sheriff of Comanche county, Heck Thomas was City Marshal of Lawton, Bill Cross was a noted Sheriff, Al Goff, Deputy U. S. Marshal from Guthrie and "Hebethah" (can not spell right) Deputy U. S. Marshal from Oklahoma City, were there to assist in capturing the desperadoes.

One of the outlaws (Spencer, I think) was advance man, He came to Lawton, bought a farm out near the mountains, moved his family on the farm. Had plenty of good horses, but was very reticent, did not mix with any body. We guarded his place close, but they did not come near, that we knew of.

I had to take a prisoner to Marlow, traveling across the country (no roads); we came to a steep canyon (we were in a buggy) and could not cross. I was looking around for the head of this

canyon. I saw three men in a wagon, with side boards, they were standing up with Winchesters beside them, driving a fine pair of big gray horses. I thought they were some of the farmers living near there. I headed towards them and asked if they knew how to cross the canyon. They said they did not, that they had just moved there. I forgot about the outlaws, I finally found a way to cross, took the prisoner to Marlow, came home.

Next day I heard the officers describing the outlaws- which fitted the description of these men in the wagon, we immediately started out to hunt them. Found they had camped for two or three days, but had passed on through. The outlaws were afraid to stop at this farm as we expected them to. They were headed for eastern Oklahoma mountains.

The officers scattered to different parts of eastern Oklahoma. There was a big reward. I can not remember the names of the three officers, they were a Deputy Marshal, Deputy Sheriff, and a policeman, who killed the Martin brothers. The outlaws had camped in a dense thicket. Just finished cooking their supper and were eating, when these officers saw their camp smoke. The officers crawled on hands and knees, until they got within close range, took good aim and killed the Martin brothers. Wounded the other outlaw, but he got away. (He was captured two years later). One of the Martin brothers was killed with a piece of bread in his mouth.

These officers received the reward; also the horses, saddles, bridles, Winchesters, and pistols of the outlaws, which they prized very highly.

Some farmers were breaking up some pasture land north of and adjoining the city limits of Cement, Oklahoma, when one of their horses fell in a hole. On examining this hole they discovered it was a grave. In the grave was a saddle, bridle, and Indian pottery, beads, bow and arrow, and human bones.

The news spread rapidly and created quite a bit of excitement. Numbers of people came out and dug for souvenirs. The hunters would take every thing they could find but the bones. These they placed back in the graves and covered over. No one knew how old these graves were, but presumably about 75 or 100 years old. To my knowledge that has been 45 years ago.