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Interviewer, Nannie Lee Burns,
July 20, 1937.

Interview with Lula Wyrick,
North Miami, Oklahoma.

Ottawa Indian.

From memory and her mother's stories.

My mother was Cathrine Robitaille, nee Wind, who was born August 18, 1845, at Ottawa, Kansas.

She was the daughter of Judge and Sallie Wind, he at one time had been Chief of the Ottawas.

My great, great-grandmother, Sallie Wind, was born near the Great Lakes and lived to be one hundred and sixteen years old and died in 1886 or '87 and is buried in the Ottawa Cemetery here.

My father was Wolford Robitaille, a fullblood Frenchman. He died when I was a month old. My step-father was Walter Clifton Jennison of Scotch-Irish descent and born at Muscatine, Iowa. He died April 7, 1834 when he was ninety years old. His nickname was "Wet."

I was born January 4, 1878 just south of Ottawa.

Grandmother was always a very active woman and remained active till her death in this county; only a few summers before she passed away she made all the straw hats for the Ottawa men and the summer before she died she walked a half mile to Ottawa to church with one crutch.

She was a favorite with the entire tribe and several years before her death her birthday was celebrated by all as a great event with a dinner and dance. Three years before her death after watching the dancers awhile she told them that she would show them how they danced when she was a girl and went out on the floor and danced for the crowd.

Removal to Indian Territory.

My mother came with her parents from Ottawa, Kansas, when she was seven or eight years old. The tribe moved here in wagons and after their arrival they helped each other to build their first houses which were of logs. Her father located one-half mile west of Ottawa when they came. The place is now known as the Lillie Wind farm.

The Muncies and the Ottawas lived together at Ottawa, Kansas, but the former received some money and bought land

in eastern Kansas instead of coming to the Indian Territory.

My mother started to school at the Ottawa Mission near here while Asa and Emeline Tuttle were in charge and went to the third reader and was taught to sing the multiplication table. She learned much, later from my step-father who was an educated man.

I had an older sister, Christiana, who later married Molt Hubbard and who now lives in California, and I also had a brother Oscar.

Our step-father was a white man. It was always a pleasure for Uncle Chris and who lived among the Indians at the Sac and Fox Agency to come to visit us as he would sing and talk in the Indian language and would tell Indian stories to us children.

Mother's Marriage.

After my father's death we stayed part of the time at her father's, though my parents had a small one-room, log house of their own and before father's death he had the logs ready to build us a new one.

My stepfather was a cowboy and helped drive cattle from the Texas Border to Baxter Springs, Kansas, and when at this

end on one trip he came to a dance at Uncle Joe Wind's, and there he met my mother, who was then Catherine Wind Robitaille. They were married shortly afterwards and went to housekeeping in the old house that my father had built. My step-father had only his pony and saddle and Mother did not have any crop or provisions laid up that year; my step-father often said, later, "All we had was a hole of turnips."

One day he said to my mother, "Sis, I'm going to get us something to eat."

He saddled his pony and went to Chetopa where he had two cousins, the Lucas Brothers, and told them that he had quit the cattle business and had married a widow with three children who did not have anything to eat. They fitted him out with a wagon and team and a load of groceries and sent him back.

My step-father knew nothing of farming or of pioneer life and often made mistakes but he had a sense of humor and always carried off an unpleasant experience with a joke perhaps at his own expense.

My father had the logs ready for a new house when he died, so my step-father decided to build one and in building

it he placed the logs on end instead of laying them longways and held them together with a piece nailed along the top end of the logs and on this piece he placed the timber on which his roof rested; the roof was of clapboards. This house stood till a few years ago and was the cause of many a joke but father would always say, "I wanted a house different from the rest of you" rather than to admit that he did not know how to build a house.

Keokuk, who was the Chief of the Sac and Fox Indians, was a friend of my step-father's and so when Charlie was a baby, my parents decided to go to visit Chief Keokuk. They had eaten what they had at home so had very little to take with them and on the trip. We only had a jug of molasses and Father would give us a long clean cob. We would stick the cob in the jug and lick it. We made the trip in a wagon and one night when we were camped, Mother saw a light in a sod house nearby and my step-father went to the house and told the lady that his wife and children were with him and asked if she would bake a pan of biscuits for them. She did, and that was a fine supper to us.

We stayed in the Sac and Fox country a year and Father was a peace officer there. Then we returned to the Ottawa country here where they remained. My step-father served for many years as clerk of the tribe, in fact, till my mother's death. She died June 18, 1916 of a paralytic stroke.

I forgot to say that Mother and my step-father were married by Asa Tuttle and they did not have to get a license and he didn't even give them a slip of paper.

My mother didn't like for us to speak Indian and we scarcely knew that we were Indian. She was half French and half Ottawa. Once, at a picnic at the Pooler Grove near the Pooler Ferry she happened to be carrying her baby in her shawl on her back when two white women noticed her and she heard them say one to the other, "There goes an Indian, wonder if she would let us see her papoose." Mother turned on them and said "My baby is as white as yours is."

My parents traded at Baxter Springs. They did not go often and the coffee that they bought was green and we would have to parch it by the fire, stirring it with a spoon and grinding it in a turned-by-hand mill, which was held between the knees.

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He went on Saturday to Pooler's for the mail.

Pooler's Ferry and Store.

Uncle Rose Pooler had settled there when the Ottawas came here and first built himself a double log house and in those days he raised lots of hogs.

This was where the old military road crossed the Neosho River, east and a little south of Miami.

As travel increased, Uncle Rose built a ferry and started a store which his wife cared for. As the mail from Cherokee was brought here for the mail hack he soon obtained a postoffice, called Pooler's postoffice. The postoffice and store were in a separate small, frame building with a board front with Pooler Store and Post Office above the door.

Then there was the shed for the horses that were kept here to change on the long drive. Robe Pooler, one of his sons, was trying to ride one of these horses one day when he was thrown and broke his back. He is still humped from the fall.

Every year on the fourth of July they had an Old Settler's picnic in the grove nearby. Well, I remember the first

merry-go-round that they had. It was pulled by a mule which went round and round while a big negro played the fiddle for music.

School boys.

When my sister was twelve, and near eight, and I was six, I started with them to school where Aunt Childs lived as the boys' matron.

Uncle Joe Wind took his two boys, one of Clay Steven's girls and us three children through in a wagon. We were five days on the road and one thing that I remember is that Uncle Joe gave us so many eggs to eat. He would buy them by the basket-ful at five cents per dozen. We would stay at the Chilocco School for nine months when we would come home for three months and then back in September. We did this each year for five years.

While at Guapaw, my brother had a fight one morning before breakfast and the Superintendent told him that he could not have any breakfast so he ran away and went home. Mother took Oscar back and she told the Superintendent when she returned him that the way in to a boy's heart was through his stomach and if he wanted to get along with the children not to deprive them of food.

McCain, who was the Superintendent was a hard man. He weighed two hundred and fifty pounds and his wife was a little woman, weighing about a hundred pounds.

From the Quaw Mission, I was sent to Abash, Indiana for two years. My last year of school was at Haskell Institute. Here we had children from many different tribes.

Sometimes they would bring in a mother and her children. They were separated and the women would work and the children were put in school. One instance I remember was that of an Indian woman and her small son who were brought in and separated. The woman went to work as a helper in the dining room. One day after they had been there several weeks as the children were leaving the dining room her son being the smallest was at the end of the line and the mother went up to him and tried to put her arms around him to love him and he pushed her back and I saw the tears come to her eyes. Her son had forgotten her.

Marriage.

While I was at Haskell Institute I met Harvey Propeck, a Miami Indian and after I returned home on July 16, 1896, we were married and went to Indiana to live. After seven months we separated and I returned to my people here.

I made application for work at the Quapaw Mission and worked there for a year. We were called "Indian Helpers." I was assistant laundress and received fifteen dollars per month and some of my clothes.

December 20, 1899, I married George Wyrick a white man who had come first to Missouri with his parents from Tennessee in a wagon drawn by oxen, then they had gone to Texas. He had married and settled at Siloam Springs where his children were raised and after the death of his wife he had come to Wyandotte where he had a nice home. We were married by Uncle Jerry Hubbard. We lived in Wyandotte two years when he moved one of his houses there on my land three miles east of Miami and so we moved to my place.

My husband always made a good living. We farmed and paid our store bill once a year.

Here we lived till two years ago my husband being in poor health, we moved to Quapaw where he died August 10, 1936, being eighty years old at the time of his death.

Items of Interest.

George Emmetic, of Ottawa and French descent, was educated at Carlisle Institute, was a brother-in-law to Rose Pooler by his first wife. He did not like Pooler.

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Mother first saw George Emmetic on horseback when she was a young girl. He was in a crowd and in some way he had a scuffle with some man over his stove-pipe hat.

He lost his young wife and baby and it affected his mind and he continued to live as a hermit at his old place in a hut south of Ottawa on the Leosho. The children were afraid of him. He would get close to a burnt stack or a straw or hay stack, or even a tree and dance around it Indian fashion, singing and throwing his ax in the air. He lived to be sixty years old.

Ti-Wah was another fullblood Indian that we were afraid of. We were afraid of Turkeyfoot too, a fullblood Shawnee who lived on Warren's Branch.

The oldest Ottawas that I think of are: Lizzie Lind, who is a trained nurse at Hartford, Connecticut; Mary Shelton, who lives with her son in Detroit but she visits here each year; Ike Williams and Dave Geboe of Miami, who likes to make you laugh by telling catchy, funny stories. One I remember he told me when I was small: "I had been hunting one 4th of July when I killed a big, big turkey. I hung it over my shoulder and its head dragged in the snow."