

CLARK, MINIFRED M.

BURNING OF INDIAN BOYS. 13923  
CYCLONES.

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Indian Pioneer History-S-149.

October 13, 1938.

## Burning of Indian Boys.

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While teaching my first school at Tecumseh, Pottawatomie County, I lived at the home of a blind girl named Jessie Keeler.

One afternoon at close of school I went down the narrow path, that served as a sidewalk, to the main street that led to the post office which was in the court house. When I was quite a distance from the main street I noticed a disturbance; men were running toward the north end of town, then some ran in the opposite direction. I thought it only excitement caused by a dog fight, as it was common to see a group of dogs get together in a snarl and people run to separate them.

When I was opposite a rooming house one block from the center of town a woman opened the front door and called to me: "Come inside, quick." I said: "What for?" She said: "The Indians are coming. Their tribe are on the way right now. If you go down town you'll be sorry." I answered: "I thought it was a dog fight" and went on.. The streets were deserted and no one in the post office

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except the postmaster. No one told me the reason for all the excitement because they were too busy finding hiding places but next morning we learned that a mob, on the edge of the Seminole, had burned to death two Seminole boys, one named McGeisey, son of a well known Seminole Councilman, for a crime which they did not commit, as was later proved.

Both Whites and Indians supposed the opposite people were after them and it was several days before some of them were brave enough to appear in public.

The Federal Government rounded up everyone who were remotely connected with the burning, even farmers who lived in the vicinity and were attracted to the scene after the burning was over, and placed them in the Federal jail at Tecumseh to await trial. I saw several who seemed to be fine men, who had to stay there quite a long time. Sympathy for these men was very strong.

One incident occurred during this excitement that amused the whole community; our little sheriff hid in his dugout.

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Cyclones.

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Two boys named Clyde Prater and Art David were camped in a tent on the Deep Fork of the North Canadian River where they had been fishing for several days. A storm came up one night while they slept and lifted their tent, carrying it completely away. The rain poured down and they hurried into Chandler for shelter, to find that Chandler had been almost swept away by a cyclone. A crowd was collected about an unfinished building which was on fire and a man was screaming: "Shoot me, don't let me die this way." He was caught by the hand under the timbers of the unfinished roof, where no one could get to him.

Clyde Prater said: "If I had dared do it I would have put him out of his agony but we all had to see him go down with the building. It was horrible."

One incident occurred that caused much amusement. Two men were sitting on the ground leaning against the board wall of the livery stable. The whole livery stable building vanished from behind them with no injury to them or the horses. When they recovered from their astonishment

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they each found the other drenched with bluing.

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One night Jessie Keeler and I were in my room on the second floor. The window was partly open toward the east. Suddenly I said: "Listen, is there a railroad east of us?" She said: "No, but that sounds like a heavy train of freight cars moving fast." It was reported, the next morning, that Maud had been swept away by one of the worst cyclones.

The Indians told us that cyclones had never visited that region before the white folks came.

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When I attended the University of Oklahoma I lived with the Hefley family. They told me some incidents that happened when the cyclone swept through the country around Norman. At one farm nearly all buildings were demolished. Many of the people from Norman went out there as soon as the storm ceased, supposing that all of the family had been swept away. They investigated a slough that looked peculiar and found the family and hogs covered over with mud. They worked fast to dig them out and save them.

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There was an old grandmother who was afraid of storms. When she saw the cloud she took the baby and sat on the feather bed. The bed, with the grandmother and baby, was lifted through the roof and they were found safely perched in the top of a tree.

Two women who lived there did not trust the house, so they ran to the fence of posts, that had no wire, and lay on the ground holding to a post and each other. They said that the wind sucked their bodies up and down and left them bald, taking every bit of their long hair which had been held by steel hairpins.

I saw this cyclone from a distance of thirty miles. I was standing at the top of a high hill on the claim watching the clouds after sunset. Suddenly a dark long streak of cloud moved toward the south, a lighter streak a little lower down, moved toward the north. They met, seemed to touch and reversed. I was too far away to see the black funnel that formed by that contact, and thought it very mysterious.