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Interview with Mrs. E. M. Clark, Pawnee, Oklahoma.
By Goldie Turner, Field Worker.
April 15, 1937.

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Mrs. E. M. Clark was born near Chicago, Illinois, in 1864, was married in 1884 and came to Oklahoma in 1893.

Mr. Clark was in the run in Old Oklahoma but did not take up a claim. He, with a doctor, and an editor, went just for a lark. While there he was appointed Judge, so he stayed there till the Strip opened. He made the run when the strip opened and took a claim about five miles south of Perry. He then opened a law office in Perry.

In the fall of 1898 we came to Pawnee. Mr. Clark was asked by the County Attorney in Pawnee to be his helper so we came to Pawnee.

We had rented our house in Perry and gone to Caney, Kansas, for a visit, then drove through from there in a light buggy. When we had got well down into the Osage Nation we began to see signs along the trail which stated either "Cross the bridge at Ralston", or "Ralston Bridge", so we kept to that road which was merely a trail. I had been dreading to cross the Arkansas river for I thought we would have to ford it till we began seeing the signs. When we got to the bridge we began looking for a town or at least some signs of habitation,, but

we saw nothing but a little tent which contained only a Dutch oven and a pan or two. I have often wondered where the word Ralston originated since the town was built some time after that. We did not know which trail to take since there were several on this side of the bridge and the few Indians we ^{met} would look ahead and say nothing when Mr. Clark would ask them the way. Fortunately, however, we got on the right trail and arrived in Pawnee in the early evening. Mr. Clark had previously gotten a letter from Mr. A. J. Biddison, who had been our friend in Caney, Kansas, and who knew we were coming to Pawnee, stating that we were welcome to the use of his tent while we trying to get located. So, upon our arrival we inquired and found their tent and then Mr. Clark drove the team down to the livery barn and put them up for the night. He then came back but after supper he decided he had better go back to the barn and see how the horses were being cared for. It was raining, and when he got to the barn he found that the manager of the barn had tied our horses out in the rain and had put another team in the barn where ours had been. Mr. Clark gave them a good talking to and they put our team back in the barn where they evidently stayed all night for they were nice and dry in the morning.

There was only one hotel in Pawnee when we came here. It was called the Rice Hotel and was down close to where the depots are now. It was not considered, however, to be a very good place

for respectable people since it was considered the rendezvous of all disreputable people.

We often drove over to Perry and back and in doing so, had to cross Black Bear ^{Creek} three times which had to be forded each time. We usually expected to eat our dinner in Morrison which was about half way. We had to go through the little town of Lela, which was at first in Noble County. It was started by an Indian who built a big two story hotel and named town the for his daughter. After the railroad went through, the few stores that were there were moved across the line into Pawnee County close to the tracks and the hotel was torn down.

In 1900 Mr. Clark was appointed County Attorney to finish out the term of the County Attorney who had dropped dead. Then, at the end of that term he was elected for another term. He had to go to Pawhuska to hold court since it was in this jurisdiction and he had to ford the Arkansas river to get there. One time when he was coming back to Pawnee he saw that the river was up and that the buggy was in danger of being overturned so he fastened everything down securely in the buggy, tied the lines to the dash board, removed his shoes, started the team across and swam beside the buggy. They drifted down stream somewhat but crossed safely.

In 1903 or 1904 Mr. Clark opened a law office with Bird S. McGuire on the second floor of the building which housed

the O.P.C.H. Dry Goods store. The manager of the store, a Mr. John Harrison, is now living in New York City.

I was well acquainted with Mr. Noble who organized the Telephone Company here. He came to visit us and told me I might choose any telephone number I wanted except 1, which was the City. I chose number 7 and it has been our telephone number ever since.

Our first home in Pawnee was a little four room cottage about two blocks south of the court house square. We moved into our present home in 1903.

I organized the first Afternoon Study Club in Pawnee. I inserted a little item in the local paper stating that any one interested in such a club would meet at the Methodist Church on a certain date. At the first meeting there were only four women present. I told them to tell their friends about it and we would meet again in a week. The next meeting there were forty present and we organized two clubs, one for afternoon and one for in the evening.

When the Santa Fe Railroad was built south from Arkansas City it came through Ralston, Skedee, Pawnee and on to Guthrie. Later it was built south from Skedee through Maramac to Cushing. There was a passenger train from Guthrie to Cushing often called "The Merry Go Round" because it almost ran in a circle, leaving

to
Guthrie in the afternoon and getting Cushing about nine
in the evening, staying there all night and getting back
to Guthrie about noon the next day. The Railroad Company
built a big lake at Maramec and the railroad accommodated
a number of us Pawnee people for week-end trips to Maramec
for fishing and picnicking.

In 1909 Mr Clark was elected a legislator represent-
ing Payne and Pawnee Counties. He was a minority leader
at the time that they tried to impeach Governor Haskell.

COMMENTS

Mr. Clark died about a year ago and Mrs. Clark shares her
home with her brother, who is a deaf mute.
