

MOORE, L. A.

INTERVIEW

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Interviewer, John F. Daugherty,  
October 16, 1937.

Interview with L. A. Moore,  
WynneWood, Oklahoma.

Born July 5, 1868,  
Livingston County, Missouri.

Parents Levi Moore, Massachusetts.  
Amy Knox, Missouri.

I was born in Livingston County, Missouri, July 5, 1868. I came in a covered wagon to the Indian Territory in 1885 and settled at Red Oak in the Choctaw Nation, east of McAlester.

Brother had a store there and I went in business with him. We had a trading post licensed by the Choctaw Government in Tuskahoma. Brother had married an Indian woman so he did not have to pay the royalty but I was a white man and single so I had to pay. The tax was a dollar and a half per year for each one hundred dollars worth of merchandise which I owned. I kept the bills, showing how much merchandise I bought each year.

We had Indians for customers and I learned to speak their language. They often laughed at my accent and pronun-

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ciation. They bought many vests. They thought they were not well dressed unless they had on a bright colored, beaded vest. The Indian women carried their money tied in handkerchiefs. They bought and paid for one article at a time. They always spread their handkerchiefs full of money on the counter and asked me to take out the amount owed for their purchase. They were very honest and truthful and expected the same of anybody with whom they dealt.

When they came to the store in wagons the women always set on the bottom of the wagon while the men sat on the seats or boards and drove the team.

We had our goods freighted from Fort Smith, for which we paid fifty cents per hundred. It took four days to make the trip.

I attended several Indian whippings. The Indian to be whipped had to remove his shirt and stand with his arms around the whipping post with his back toward the person who was to do the whipping. He began whipping at the waist and each lash was put a little higher until the neck of the victim was reached. Then if there had not been enough lashes given he

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started down the back striking between the ridges of the first lashes. I saw one Indian receive one hundred lashes and never stop chewing his tobacco. They were very stoical and could take a lot of punishment.

One day I took my wife and two small girls to an Indian Court in Red Oak. The girls saw something which amused them and they began to laugh. The judge said, "Girls, hush!" The girls never forgot this incident.

The elections were very exciting in those days. Sometimes they would almost be wars. An Indian was running for sheriff of Sugar Loaf County. They had no way of getting printing done, so this Indian wrote the following on a piece of paper and carried it around, showing it to people and asked that they support him. This was written in English. "And I have to run Sugar Loaf County Sheriff. If my vote is filled. I work by the office." His name was signed. Everybody laughed about his having to run Sheriff. He was not elected.

One day while I was in the store a man came along and offered to sell me two bears. I expected them to be as large as dogs and I offered him ten dollars for them. When

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he delivered them he brought them in saddle pockets. They were only fifteen days old and did not have their eyes open. I took them and fed them on a bottle. After twenty-five days they opened their eyes. One of them died but I raised the other one to maturity. I kept him tied to a coal shed.

We burned coal there instead of wood. All we had to do was to walk over to the side of a hill and pick up the coal. There was a well there where people came for water not far from the shed. So many people teased this bear to get him to run at them that he became very dangerous and so I had him killed.

There were many deer near Red Oak. I can remember when deer hams sold for twenty-five cents each.

I knew an Indian named Lewis who killed two rattlesnakes, mounted them and laid them across his door way to keep the chickens out of his house. Rattlesnakes were numerous.

I was foreman under United States Marshal John Solman for a time.

I moved to WynneWood in 1901 and have lived here since.