

LYKINS, WILLIS

INTERVIEW

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Nannie Lee Burns
Interviewer.
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Interview with willis Lykins,
205 N. Walnut
Commerce, Oklahoma

My father, Edward Lykins, was adopted into the consolidated tribes of Peorias, Miamis, Weas, Kaskaskias and Piankeshaws and was given the name of Ma-cha-co-me-ah.

When father was seventeen, David Perry sent him to the Indian Territory to fence and to help prepare his location here for the coming of his family and that winter father made or rather split a thousand rails and later it was discovered that he had placed them on the wrong headright.

At eighteen, he joined the 19th Kansas Volunteers to help put the Indians on the reservation at Fort Sill. Of those who were in the company only one man remains today and that is David L. Spotts, now in California, and he and father wrote to each other until father's death last year.

Father again returned to the home of Mr. Perry and later came with him and his family when the Peorias removed to this country, making his home with that family near Peoria.

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rather first married a Shawnee woman, who lived but a few years, and in 1896 married Sarah Williams, an Ottawa Indian, who was my mother.

During the years that father lived with Mr. Perry they were near Spring River in the northeastern part of this county and he had an old boat on that river. He was there when the Nez Perces were held in this county and he formed a great friendship with Chief Joseph, their leader, and often would lend his boat to Chief Joseph to go fishing and sometimes would go with him and in this way he came to know them very well.

rather always said that the Indians were like lost children who could not understand just why they had been brought here, as they had only tried to keep their old homes and they had no idea of what to expect next, so they had no cause to take any interest in anything but hunted and fished most of their time, though they were not allowed to go any great distance from their camp.

While in Columbus and while he was connected with the firm of C. E. Middaugh & Co., Wayland Lykins married Miss Anna Middaugh, and in 1884, with his family, removed

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to his home on land joining the present city of Miami on the east and joining my father's home. A part of our old homes is now included in the Rockdale Addition to Miami.

rather gave most of his time to his farm but his brother preferred other lines of work, aiding those who were wanting a town in this part of the country and he assisted in purchasing about six hundred acres from the Ottawa Indians for the Miami townsite.

he made frequent trips to Washington in the interest of establishing the new town and in getting the legislation passed in Congress in 1891, ratifying the sale of the land. For many years after the establishing of the town he was the President of the townsite Company.

he was the author of the bill making Miami one of the four Court towns of the Northern District of the Indian Territory, also of a bill making Miami the first town in the territory in which you could secure a warranty deed to your lots and record it, he also drew up a bill making it possible to record chattel mortgages and a bill permitting the Peoria and Miami Indians to sell half of their lands.

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One thing I have overlooked in this is the description of the way in which the Nez Perces fished. They would take a long stick and split the end of it and to this end was attached a line and hook. The hook was placed back in the split and they would draw this stick back and forth through the water and hook the fish, and the fish would pull the hook from the split in the pole but the line held and in this way they landed their fish.

Also in the early days, messages were carried by runners; sometimes they took a verbal message and again they would have a piece of bark or something else that had a certain meaning which they understood. Again, they would flash their messages from hilltop to hilltop.

We continued to live on the farm until my brother, two sisters and myself were quite good sized when Father built a home and moved to Miami to send us to school. I grew up there and later married Miss Hazel Trudgeon of that city and we continued to make it our home until it became more convenient to my business to live in Commerce and here my two boys are attending school.