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Indian-Pioneer History, S-149
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ONE ESCAPE OF THE
NOTED OUTLAW,
HENRY STARR.
Given by an old timer.
Alexander Huling
510 Osage
Bartlesville, Oklahoma

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Although he had been as notoriously dramatized as Pretty Boy Floyd and generally known as a gun-thirsty bandit, Henry Starr, according to Mr. Huling, frontiersman here, was a man of a different character from the publicized version. Gentle, courteous and kind are his adjectives describing Starr.

Mr. Huling, now at the peak of seventy, and still sturdy and mentally keen for his years, remembers vividly his contacts with Henry Starr.

His narrative begins about ten days after the Caney bank robbery in which Starr, a white man named Nucome, and a young man called "The Kid" held up the Caney National Bank.

Mr. Huling was operating a saw mill then on the west banks of the Little Caney River about five miles north of what is now Dewey.

When the Starr gang came to the river,

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it was about half bank full, but that didn't bother them. One man swam across and obtained a boat, rowed back and got the other two men. Starr with his gun and saddle in the boat, held tight to a rope fastened to the horse, which was swimming across the river.

A 12-year-old boy living at the mill then got the thrill of his life by holding Starr's gun, after the boat had reached shore. It had been raining that day and Starr was not anxious to lay his gun in the mud.

"What about something to eat?" Starr ^{ed}asked Mr. Huling.

"Sure, but you will have to wait until it is cooked," was Mr. Huling's hospitable answer.

"We'd like to have some corn for our horses," Starr then said.

~~"That will have to be gotten from my~~
tenant, around the bend," Mr. Huling replied. So Starr sent "The Kid" and made himself agreeable while the supper cooked. But "The Kid", however,

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soon returned with no corn.

"Didn't he have any?" Starr wanted to know.

"Yes a little," The Kid said. "But as he had to haul it quite a distance he didn't want to sell it."

"I'll get the corn all right," Starr said quietly and came back shortly with an ample amount.

It was just about sundown when they sat down to supper. Before entering, however, Starr handed over his guns. Each had on their person a Winchester, two six-shooters, a bowie knife and a wire cutter.

When ^{ed}asked, "Did you know who he was? Weren't you afraid? Couldn't you have ~~me~~ held him up in possession of the weapons?" Mr. Huling smiled. "No one tried to deputize themselves those days. Everyone minded their own business. No one ^{ed}asked questions. If anyone was hungry and wanted something to eat, we fed them. If we came to a house and no one was home, we helped ourselves to something to eat, but always managed

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to observe the ruling, usually pasted on the wall; to wash our own dishes. We didn't go by laws then, we went by a code. A code of six words: "Tote square with the other fellow." Hard sometimes to do when the other fellow had the first shot on you. Of course I knew it was ^{the} Starr gang. He was every inch an Indian with his high cheek bones and dark swarthy skin, and everyone knew his gang consisted of a white man and a kid."

Starr, according to his conversation at the supper table, was going into the Osage to hunt. After supper he immediately ask^{ed}: "How much damage have I done?"

"The usual fee, is twenty cents a meal," answered Mr. Huling.

Starr paid the fare and turned toward the youngster; "Here son is a piece of money for holding my gun," he said kindly.

Starr waited until outside the house before lighting his cigaret, a courtesy then shown to women.

Ten years later after Starr was pardoned

for stopping a desperado 's violence in the jail at Fort Smith, Arkansas, he again contacted this Old Timer at a hotel in Tahlequah.

Mr. Huling, absorbed in his reading was aroused by a warm "hello". It was Starr who had not forgotten his hospitality.

"It was easy money, not blood money Starr wanted," was Mr. Huling's statement. His first misdemeanor was surely an accident."