

# NIGHT RIDE ACROSS INDIAN TERRITORY

Contributed by Doris Dykes

## Recalling What Led to My First Meeting With the Late J.J. Terry

Tuesday, July 2, 1935 Backward Glances  
by A.W. Neville

The death some little time ago at Hugo of J.J. Terry reminded me of the trip I made to Indian Territory thirty-six years ago to see the execution of William Goings, Choctaw Indian, the last to be executed under trial and conviction of the tribal courts, the jurisdiction for such cases as murder and horse theft and other penal offenses having been taken from the Indians by the Federal government, which had established its courts in that country. This also took from the Paris and Fort Smith courts their jurisdiction of offenses in the Territory. The Indian had been convicted of murder some years before the Federal courts replaced Indian tribunals, and was sentenced to be shot by the sheriff at Alikchi court ground, which was known to us here as the sulphur springs by reason of a spring of that mineral water at the place north of where now is the town of Valliant. There was no east and west railroad then and no Hugo. The Frisco had been built little more than two years and a station a short distance north of where is now Hugo was called Goodland. The only way to get to Alikchi was by horse vehicle and four of us made

the trip. Three of John Grant's deputy marshals, Joe McKee, the field deputy, and Fred Gaines and A.I. Sutherland, office deputies, and myself formed the party. I was doing newspaper work and they went along for the novelty of the affair, and well for me that Joe McKee was one, else we would never have reached the place. We went on the Frisco railroad to Goodland, leaving here in the afternoon, and reaching there just before sundown. J.J. Terry had a hotel and livery station at Goodland and from him we expected to get a team and go across country to Alikchi. Terry, his wife told us, had already gone over earlier in the day, but she supplied us with a hack and a pair of long legged mules and after eating supper we started out. The night was dark and we had neglected to put a lantern on the hack, and when we reached the Gates creek bottoms where the road forked Joe had to strike matches to look at the wheel tracks in the road to determine which was the most recently traveled, as he knew several people had passed over the road on the way to the execution, which was set for the next day. Then later we got entirely off the road and had to wake a man at a house we ran onto and get directions which way to drive to get back. It was in the foothills of the mountains and slow traveling. We finally got back on the road and

reached Little river just at daybreak and after being ferried across drove into Alicki as the sun rose. Among the crowd assembling there was Mr. Terry, who had arrived the afternoon before and was mightily surprised to see us. He and McKee were old friends, in fact Joe was well known to nearly everybody in that section where he had operated as a deputy marshal under Sheb Williams some years before. We saw the execution and late in the afternoon returned to Goodland, spent the night in Terry's hotel, had breakfast there next morning and returned to Paris on the early train. It was a great trip but one that I would not care to make again.