

STORY OF J. H. ROANE, JR.

By W. H. Roane

J. H. Roane, Jr., of Bedford County Tennessee made the run into District 3, now Cleveland County, Oklahoma, on April 22, 1889, on horseback. He spent the first day and night in and near Norman. Later he staked a claim in the eastern part of Cleveland County.

A few years later he taught school at Highland, 3 miles south of Clearbrook. He rode on horseback over 4 miles to teach for \$30.00 per month. His wife, Laura Richerdson, and all children but one, Aubrey, died before 1900. Aubrey died in 1909.

In 1900 he was married to Rachel Henry, of Georgia, and had four children by this marriage, George D., Houston, Ruth and Helen.

The following is his own story as printed in the Norman Transcript in the 1940's.

WILD GAME HELPED SETTLERS

By J. H. Roane, Jr.

I was born in Bedford County, Tennessee, February 8, 1866, and grew up on the farm. My ancestors emigrated from North Carolina to Tennessee. When Oklahoma was proclaimed open to settlement, I was much determined to try for a claim for my father, who had often talked of acquiring land here, but could not come through and make the run at that time. So I came through the territory with two cousins (the Holden boys) arriving at the old Oklahoma line at a point about eleven miles east of Norman only a few hours before the opening. Edgar Holden and I crossed the line at high noon, April 22, 1889, on horseback, but found that some people had preceded us with ox trains, and we also found the best land already taken up and if the whole country was to be judged by what we saw, Uncle Sam made a bungle of the opening. It was very unfair; people who obeyed the law could get second and third class land only; the Sooners had the rest.

I came far enough west to see the small station, which was Norman at that time. Then I went North and camped on the fork of Little River with an acknowledged "Sooner" or rather he with me, for I had the wagon sheet, some coffee, etc.

I came back to camp next morning and my cousin and I took claims embracing a nice valley, though smaller than we wished. My father came in June and I gave up the claim to him NW 1/4 Sec. 11, T 8 N, R 1 W. I later acquired another claim which I traded for a wagon, team and harness, without which I could not have stayed.

I acquired the place (SW 1/4 Sec 2, T 8 N, R 1 W) that I homesteaded this way: A certain man was attempting to homestead the two best eighties in two quarters and no one had objected but of attempting to file was obliged to take a regular quarter section and that left one vacant and I went promptly to the land office in Guthrie and filed on it. (Took the last train on the last day of filing.)

Meantime I attended church in a dugout. The minister was Reverend Swartz. I met a family by the name of Julian about that time and they were fine Christian people. We became friends and on invitation I stayed two or three weeks with them. Mr. Julian was a crack shot and never failed and Mrs. Julian was a fine cook and did we have wild turkey and venison, hot biscuits cooked in dutch ovens, Oh Boy!

I got to be a fair shot with a rifle. My luckiest shot was cutting big gobblers neck off at his breast with a Winchester at 80 yards. I learned from Mr. Julian that a deer will run off, however you shoot him-- if enough legs to carry him. Many of the first settlers had very little on which to live, so rabbits and other game were utilized, and I have

hauled stovewood to Norman at \$1.00 per load to replenish the empty larder.

I married in '91, lived in cabin and dugout. The land was very fertile then but we have delayed terracing many years and much land is deteriorated badly now. Since this is the case, good enough land for the purpose should be set to fruit, and the balance used as pasture.

I grew a small commercial apple orchard as I became able but was handicapped for want of roads and trucks which we had not at that time. However, I did fairly well and am setting more trees now as I am only 73 years of age.

I have read the Norman Transcript for fifty years - a county paper of great merit, fairness and tolerance.

*J. H. Roane
106 Castro Street*

J. H. Roane died on May 19, 1945, and was survived by his wife, Rachel, and four children, George D. Roane of Norman, now living at old homestead, W. H. Roane, now residing in eastern Cleveland County on part of, and adjoining the original homestead, Ruth Hitchcock, of Ardmore, Oklahoma, and Helen Menard (deceased December 2, 1971) of Tulsa. All four were graduates of Oklahoma University.

W. H. Roane