

GEORGE BATES, WICHITA

INTERVIEWED BY: WILLIAM E. BITTLE

TRANSCRIBED BY: WILLIAM E. BITTLE

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 6-30-70

GENERAL SUBJECT: WICHITA HORTICULTURE, CROPS RAISED, STORAGE OF CROPS, ETC.

PARTICULAR TOPICS DISCUSSED:

CORN: VARIETIES RAISED AND MANNER OF CULTIVATION
HARVESTING AND STORING OF CROPS
PREPARATION OF CORN DISHES
OTHER VEGETABLE FOODS EATEN
WICHITA DIVISIONS

BACKGROUND OF INFORMANT:

George Bates is in his mid-seventies (as of 1972). He is well educated. He has lived in the vicinity of Gracemont all his life. He owns land and has farmed.

CORN: VARIETIES RAISED AND MANNER OF CULTIVATION

When the Wichitas settled here, right after the Civil War, the government issued the Indians plows, implements, and things--like walking cultivators.

(What did the Wichita use for farm implements before that time?)
Well, mainly they had a buffalo collarbone, they put a handle on it, and they used it for a hoe. That had sharp rocks they could dig with. They had stones axes.

(Who did most of the field work?)

Mostly the women folks. Sometimes the old men could help out. They're not able to hunt and fight.

(When did the Wichita begin farming in a particular year?)

Well, some say there's some brush or weed around, and when it comes out, it's time to start farming. They start planting when the weather is favorable--when it gets warm.

(When they started in the spring, what would be the first thing they would do toward planting?)

Well, they would clear the land. They didn't have plows. They just had hoes to dig holes with and put the corn in there. They worked the land with a hock, with rock implements, with stone. They used that hoe to make little soft places in the ground and to put the seed in there. Mostly the women did that.