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AUSTIN, OTIS FRANK. SECOND INTERVIEW #4229

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
AUSTIN, OTIS FRANK, SECOND INTERVIEW.

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4229.

Field worker's name Ethel B. Tackitt.
This report made on (date) May 19, 1937. 1937

1. This legend was
secured from (name) Otis Frank Austin.
Address Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.
This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,
If Indian, give tribe Male; white.
2. Origin and history of legend or story Jerking wild meat for food
and tanning hides among early settlers of Oklahoma; 1880 to later
dates. Medicines and herbs used by settlers near Fort Reno in
1880's.
3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached 3 4

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Ethel B. Packitt,
May 19, 1937.
Field Worker.

An interview With Otis Frank
Austin, Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

Jerking or drying wild meats for
food during the early 1880's
Near Fort Reno, Oklahoma.

My father and the men with whom we associated, living near Fort Reno, Oklahoma, in 1886, made it a practice to go hunting each fall and kill game to furnish their families with meat through the winter.

If deer, antelope or buffalo meat was to be jerked, the leaders, tendons and muscles were taken out, and the flesh was cut into long thin strips, a hole was cut in one end of each piece and a piece of green twig was stuck into the hole, fastening the two pieces together. Two forked posts would be set up, with a pole between. The poles were high enough so that nothing could reach the meat. Then these two pieces of meat attached to the stick was laid across the pole until it was filled but the pieces of meat did not touch each other. Then a fire was built of bark, hickory was best, and the meat was smoked until thoroughly dry. Then it was taken down and packed or hung in a cool place until needed.

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It did not spoil because the air was pure. Father always saved the hides of all the animals he killed, brought them home and we tanned them; ^{to} make buckskin or leather as the case might be.

Buckskin was made by rubbing wood ashes into a paste, by mixing them with water, and rubbing this paste into the hairy side of the deer skin. The deerskin was rolled up and left about three days or until the hair would slip off.

We had a place made like a saw-horse with a sharpened piece of oakwood for the top and when the skin was ready to take the hair off, we would take it to this rack, or saw-horse, and sit astride the rack, pulling the hide down over the sharpened edge, first one way and then the other, until the hair was all scraped off.

When the hair was off, we would mix together one pound of alum to three pounds of salt and rub the mixture into the fleshy side of the skin as long as it would take it. The hide would then be rolled up and placed in a cool spot, where it would stay for about three weeks. Then it would be taken out and rubbed until soft. It would be washed many times in warm soap suds until completely soft and clean.

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If we wanted it colored, the yellow ocher root or red poke berries would be placed in the water. After being wrung out of the water, the skin was continuously rubbed until dry to prevent hard spots.

To make skin water proof, a mixture of fish oil, rosin and beeswax was rubbed, warm, into the hairy side of the skin. Eel oil was best because the eel has more oil than other fish.

We wore many garments made of buckskin. Our trousers were cut much like the present-day overalls, but the Indians cut theirs from two pieces with the front lapped to the back and they wore long hunting shirts also cut in front and back pieces.

Loose sleeves in hunting shirts were called squaw sleeves.

MEDICINES MADE FROM HERBS
USED BY THE AUSTIN FAMILY,
IN THE EARLY '80's, WHILE
LIVING NEAR FORT RENO.

There were not many doctors to be had in the early 80's and we were doctored at home.

Mother made a spring tonic which would make you eat anything after the first few doses. This was made of wild dried

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cherry bark, yellow puccoon, gentian, and bitter apple, all boiled in one quart of water, thoroughly, then strained.

To this mixture was added one pint of whiskey and two table-spoons of sugar and it was then placed in a bottle to be shaken and taken when needed. All these plants are to be found almost any place in Oklahoma.

Tea made of blood-root was used for blood diseases. Poke root was used for kidney trouble and mullein was used for coughs and colds.

In 1899 I met a Comanche Indian woman called "Poison Annie" at Fort Reno. At that time she claimed to be one hundred and five years old. This was at Fort Reno.