

JOHNNY, MARY.

INTERVIEW

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field worker's name

Bessie L. Thomas

This report made on (date)

April 30,

193, 8

1. This legend was secured from (name)

Mrs. Mary Johnny

Address

Saddle Mountain, Oklahoma

This person is (~~male~~ or female) ~~white, negro~~ Indian,

If Indian, give tribe

This legend has been told to me many times

by my grandmother and my father.

2. Origin and history of legend or story

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 0

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Bessie L. Thomas,
Investigator,
April 20, 1938.

An Interview with Mrs. Mary Johnny,
Saddle Mountain, Oklahoma.

The Sun Boy's Wife
and
The Spider Woman

The Kiowas were camped along the Arkansas River in south-eastern Oklahoma many, many years ago and this story has been told to me by my father ever since I was a little girl.

The chief and his wife, at the time this story opens, had only one child, a little girl, named Pi-E-Miton (Sun-girl). These parents were very careful with their little girl and were so afraid something would happen to her, that they hardly allowed her out of their sight. Seldom did she get to play with the other children. One day she cried and cried to go play with her little friends, and begged so hard that her mother finally agreed to let her go, but cautioned her to be very careful.

Down near the river there was a big shady cottonwood tree, where the children played and this day our little girl in this story saw in the branches of the tree, a pretty

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colored, tiny bird, called in Kiowa the Thumb Bird or Humming Bird. She asked the other children to let her climb the tree, so that she could catch the pretty bird. They told her she could not catch it because it would fly away but she insisted that she could and so, started climbing after it. When almost to the bird, she reached out to get it, but it flew on to another limb, and the little girl moved up to where it had stopped. Again she reached out for it, and again the bird moved higher. This kept up, until the bird had flown out to the tip end of the highest limb. The other children stood watching, and crying for her to come down, saying she could never catch the bird but she said, "No, I am going to catch it." When the bird had reached the end of the highest limb, the tree began to grow. It grew, and grew, until it reached the sky and the little girl found out that she could not get down, or go back. Soon she found herself near the sun where there was another world. She looked down, but could not see her home and she began to cry and when she looked again, for the bird, she saw it had turned into a boy and she decided that she would have to go on to this other world. She watched in amazement as the boy knocked and the new world opened, and they both entered. They were taken to a

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teepee, which was the home of this boy and where they were given food. The years passed and the two children grew up. One day the young boy named "The Sun Boy" took this young girl from another world to a teepee for his wife. They were very happy and every day the young husband would go out and hunt for buffalo, telling his wife never to open the space through which they had come to this world near the sun. He would bring home each day buffalo meat, and she would prepare it for drying.

In due time a son was born to this couple and this increased their happiness but for months the young mother had been thinking of her parents and as time went on, she became lonesome and homesick to see them.

One day while her husband was away hunting she was crying for her people and she opened the space in this world she had come to, looked down, saw her people, the children in her tribe, and saw her parents weeping for her. She closed the space back up, went home and said nothing. The next day when her husband started hunting she asked him to bring her all the sinew he could, from the buffalo. She began saving it and each time he would bring home buffalo

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meat, his wife would dry the sinew, plait it together and tie it end to end in a long string, hiding it from her husband. When she had a long rope, one day, while her husband was gone, she took the sinew rope, tied one end to the door frame of the space, opening out of the sky world, tied her boy, who was now two years old, to her waist, and started letting herself and son down the rope, hoping in this way to reach her world from which she had come.

When she got to the end of the rope, she found that it lacked about five feet of touching the earth and there she and the boy dangled. She tried with all her might to touch the earth with her toes, but could not. She looked down for her father's tepee but could not see it, nor any other tepee anywhere, and concluded the camp had moved. She cried out for someone to come and help her, but no one heard her.

In the evening when her husband came home, he looked for his wife and baby but could not find them. He ran to the opening and there he saw them dangling on the rope. This made him so angry that he went and got his hunting knife, made from a rock and said, "I will kill her for disobeying Me".

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So with great force he sent the knife sliding down the rope and it hit his wife on the back of her head, killing her. The rope broke and his wife and baby fell to the ground.

The little boy was not killed but lay on the ground sucking his mother's breast, after she was dead. This he did day after day until he received no more sustenance from her. The Spider woman, mother of Pi-E-Miton, had refused to move with the tribe, still thinking that some day her lost daughter might return to them.

When Pi-E-Miton, and her son had dropped from the sky world, they were not far from her parent's home. After the boy could get no more sustenance from his mother's breast, he began wandering, to find food. One day, while his grandmother was away from the tepee, this little boy named after his father the Sun Boy wandered into the tepee, saw some soup in a bowl and drank it. The grandfather was asleep in the tepee, and awakened in time to see a little child, who ran from the tepee when he was discovered. The grandfather ran in haste to tell his wife what he had seen. She asked him if the child was a boy or girl. This he could

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not say. So the Spider woman said, "We will lay in wait for the child and capture him tomorrow if he returns." The next day the boy returned but as soon as he saw some one watching him he ran as fast as his little legs would carry him. This was repeated for several days. Finally, the grandmother said, "I'll hide just inside the door and grab him when he comes today," This she did but when she caught the boy, he yelled, bit and scratched until he got away. The Spider woman said, "I will put a bow and arrow and a ball across the doorway. If the child picks up either it will mean that he is a boy." So the next day the boy came and picked up the bow and arrow. The old Spider woman began to chant an Indian lullaby. The baby stood as if hypnotized. The grandmother picked up the child and saw in his face a likeness of her long lost daughter, and said, "My baby has returned to me in the form of a son and I know this is her child. I will raise him as my own child." So each day she would sing to him and when she would go away to the spring or to the garden she would put the baby to sleep, lay him in his own mother's cradle and spin a spider web over the cradle so that he could not run away. As the boy grew older he was taught by his grandfather

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to use the bow and arrow. One day the boy did something naughty, and the grandfather, thinking he would punish him by turning himself into a serpent, which he could do at will, did so and, scaring the boy, was shot and killed by his own grandson with his bow and arrow. The grandmother wailed and mourned for her husband and said, "Oh why did you kill your grandfather?" The boy said, "I didn't; I killed a big snake."

One day the boy said, "Grandma, make me a big hoop, to roll". So she did but cautioned the boy not to roll it toward the south, where lived a mean old man who had four coats of scaly skin, all over his body. But the boy did not mind, and rolled his hoop south. He came to a high hill, rolled the hoop up the hill, and it got away from him and started rolling down. He watched it and saw it roll on top of a tepee and lodge on the poles sticking out of the tepee. He went down hill, and saw an old man with a thick scaly skin. He asked the man to get his hoop off the tepee. The old man laughed and said, "I am Fourcoats, and I am going to kill you. My four coats of skin represent the four corners of the earth, and I am strong enough to conquer the world."

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The boy was so frightened that he could not move. Old Fourcoats said, "Stand with your face to the east, and I will shoot four arrows into your body."

The first arrow went on the right of the boy, the second on the left of him, the third fell at his feet and when the fourth one was shot the old man looked, and lo, the boy was standing in the bow of a beautiful rainbow. The old man was bewildered. He then said, "Let us go into the tepee." They went inside and the old man tried to poison the boy with some kind of poisoned snake. But the boy said, "Smoke stay above my head, stay above my head," and he was not poisoned.

Then the boy said, "Let us go outside and I am going to kill you." The old man said, "No, you cannot kill me", and asked if he could stand with his face to the east, which he was allowed to do. The boy began to shoot. The first arrow shot off the first scaly coat, the second shot off the second coat and the third, the third coat. The fourth arrow went through old Fourcoats' heart, and old Fourcoats was no more.

The boy tore down the tepee, got his hoop, and went home and told his grandmother what had happened. She said,

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"Now my son, you have the power of the four corners of the earth, together with the power of the Sun, for you are a Sun child. You are a man now. Go out and conquer all battles". So the Sun-boy conquered every battle he went into, and that is why today the Kiowas are a great tribe.