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BANKS, DICK.

THIRD INTERVIEW

10207

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

BANKS, DICK

THIRD INTERVIEW

#10207

Field worker's name **Bessie L. Thomas**

This report made on (date) **March 9** 193**8**

1. This legend was secured from (name) **Dick Banks**
Address **Marlow, Oklahoma**

This person is (male or female) **White**, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe **Male, White**

2. Origin and history of legend or story **This legend was told to Mr. Banks by a full-blood Kiowa Indian**

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

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Bessie L. Thomas
Investigator
March 7, 1938.

Interview with Dick Banks,
Marlow, Oklahoma.

This is the Legend of the landing of the white man, as seen through the Indians' eyes, many, many moons ago. Somewhere on the eastern coast, at the rising of the sun one morning, the Indians saw tall objects appearing out of the east and skimming over the sea objects much different from anything they had ever seen before. They became frightened, hid away in the forest and watched from a distance these huge monsters of the sea as they approached nearer and nearer the shore. As seen from a distance these objects became still and presently small canoes were lowered and men were seen to head for shore. The Indians knew what canoes were, but had never seen large sailing vessels before or people with such white faces, dressed in such queer looking raiment, hats and shoes, so when they landed on the shore, the Indians went forward to see the strange white people who were intruding into their country.

One white man came forward and made signs of friendly greetings and through the sign language said he and his comrades wished to form friendship with the Indians. This

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was agreed to by all the Indians except one chief who did not like the looks of these strange white people. He was very much displeased at their intrusion into the Indian domain, thought they really meant harm, and insisted on driving them away, if necessary take their lives. But one of the younger braves chided him and said this would only be an act of cowardice since there were only a few of them and the Indians were so many. Through the sign language it was understood they would hold council, call in all their medicine men and give the white people their answer the following day, so the white men returned to the ship to await the decision of the Indians.

The Indians held council and agreed on a very rigid experiment which was to be explained and proposed to the white men. Meeting him next day at the appointed time, they picked out a man, gave him an Indian bow and a brace of arrows, and said, "We accept your offer of friendship, if white man can do this deed. Pale-face go out in this Indian country, kill buffalo bull with Indian's arrow, cut hide in small, narrow continuous string, beginning at the curly-cue on top of buffalo's wethers, consuming the entire hide. Indians in forest no kill

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you, varmints, or wild animals, no harm you. Bring string back, Indian tie string to a tree at water's edge, stretching it out across the bend in the beach, and tying the other end to another tree at water's edge. The enclosed land inside this string we give you to use and to do with as you like."

Of course, they thought this task was so hard to accomplish that the white man they had picked would not have the heart to undertake such a feat, but to their surprise he accepted the opportunity they offered, went out alone and was gone some three or four days. His comrades had given up hopes of ever seeing him return alive and were almost ready to set sail when one evening just at dusk he staggered into camp, loaded down with a green buffalo string that was half a mile in length. When the string was tied across the bend, from tree to tree, the land enclosed was approximately one hundred sixty acres.

The white men began immediately to bring equipment from the big ships and erected log houses, cleared and spaded up the land and began to plant seed. The Indians kept a very watchful eye on the string, and found it always intact. The

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white man had been warned to stay within the enclosure and this was carried out in a very satisfactory way, but for only a short period of time. Part of the white men remained in the log houses and some left in their big water wagons.

After a number of moons had passed, ships returned, more white men came ashore, more ships came. The Indians watched in amazement. They were offered many different kinds of fruits, vegetables and melons. These they refused, having never seen them before in their country and not knowing they were food. As time went on this string seemed to stretch and enclose more land, but was always in place. Yet it encroached on the Indians premises, pushing them farther and farther away from the original land grant.

At the time this treaty was made the entire American continent was in the hands of the Red man. But at the wind-up, he finds himself today, inside this buffalo thong enclosing 160 acres of land for each Indian man, woman and child.