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BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

BARNETT, NANCY GRAYSON.

INTERVIEW.

#12128

Field Worker's name Grace Kelley

This report made on (date) November 11, 1937

1. Name Nancy Grayson Barnett

2. Post Office Address Bryant, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) 1 mile south of Bryant, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth Half mile west of Springhill; past fifty years old.

6. Name of Father Sosie Grayson Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother Miley Asberry Place of birth Indian Territory

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached _____

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Interviewer, Grace Kelley,
November 11, 1937.

Interview with Nancy Grayson Barnett,
Bryant, Oklahoma.

Born Half mile west of Springhill.

Parents Sosie Grayson, Indian Territory.
Miley Asberry, Indian Territory.

My people came from Alabama under Opuithli Yahola, but I do not know anything about the trip except that all the Indians felt saddened by having to make it.

They went to Kansas and lots died while there. Lots were dug up and brought back to be buried at home. It is our belief that Opuithli Yahola was reburied at Fort Gibson with a lot of other soldiers.

He had some Indian money and when they scattered they could not take it as it would be too heavy; there was a trunk full or rather it was in a trunk.

Yahola, a prophet.

There used to be an old Indian prophet whose last name was Yahola but I don't know his first name. It was not Opuithli nor Billie. His allotment was on Cane Creek about twelve miles or less west of Muskogee. The Midland Valley

BARNETT, NANCY GRAYSON. INTERVIEW.

12128

-2-

Railroad went through his place after he had foretold its coming. The switch was called Yahola. There was a store a half mile southeast and across the river from it but I don't know who owned it.

This old man is dead now or he could tell where the treasure was hidden as he told us, but we didn't pay much attention to it, but it was buried near some creek and not on his place.

Medicine Doctor.

There are different kinds of Medicine Men but none will do you any good if you don't have faith in him. There are not as good ones now as there were, for the younger people think it smart to copy the white people and will not learn the ways of the older Indians.

There is the herb doctor and the one who blows through a cane into the medicines. Then, there is the prophet or fortune teller who doesn't cure diseases.

We both know and use the different herbs for ordinary sickness but my mother was one of the best around here. When anyone got sick, even in Weleetka, they would come and get her but now that she is dead and none of us learned to

BARNETT, NANCY GRAYSON. INTERVIEW.

12128

- 3 -

be good doctors like her, they don't need to come here for we couldn't do any good like she did. I wish we could but it must be some gift. She could cure up a gunshot wound in four days.

Redroot: A vine. Go to woods where it grows and dig up or pull up so as to get the roots. Take off the rough dirty part and beat it up and cover with cold water and let stand until the water gets real red. Throw the roots away, blow in the water and say some words. It is good for most everything. To get rid of the poisons of the body, like when you ache all over, or have fevers or want to eat green corn.

Broom weed makes a tea or medicine and, taken for pneumonia, colds or consumption, will cure them every time; or bathe in it for skin diseases like the itch.

Horsemint makes a medicine to put on the tonsils, from the inside.

Stomp Dances.

The real Indian name is a Stomp Dance but they have added some names to some of the Stomp Dances.

They have a Stomp Dance the middle of April; the second, the middle of May; the third, the middle of June and that

BARNETT, NANCY GRAYSON.

INTERVIEW:

12128

- 4 -

one lasts all night. Then the king sets the date for them to come back in July (when he thinks the green corn will be ready to eat) and clean the "yard." They all gather at that date with hoes and clean about an acre or more of all grass and weeds and pile them around a pole until there is a big pile four or five feet high. This pile is allowed to rot instead of being burned. Then the king tells them when to come back for the Green Corn Dance. It is usually the next Saturday or Sunday, about the middle of July. If they meet Sunday they visit that day. Monday, they have two Ribbon Dances by the women. The men do not eat all day and night; that night they take medicine. Wednesday, they sleep all day and the women and kids stand around. Thursday, they use to go out and hunt; now they go out but have poor luck hunting. Friday, the women have another Ribbon Dance. Saturday, the men do not eat a bite all day and they dance all night and break up in the morning. After they dance all night, they run to the creek and jump in four times; they must duck their heads under the water with their eyes open.

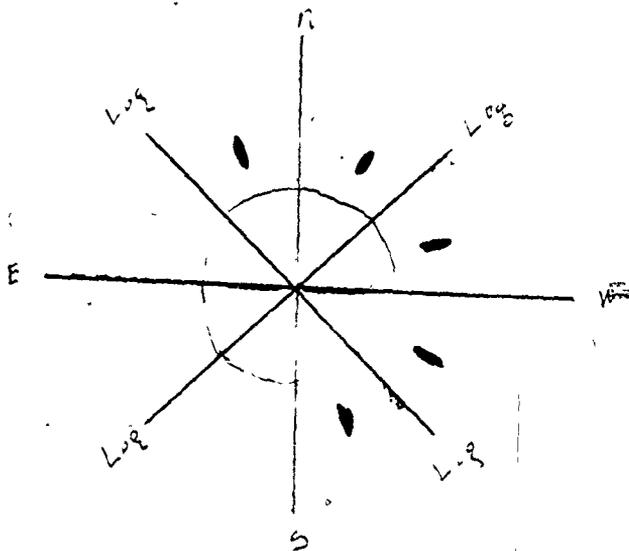
The men must not talk to a woman. It is a five dollar fine to take a drop of whiskey. "Sick" women just watch

- 5 -

the dance from a distance. If any of these rules are broken the medicine is broken for all who take the medicine and there will be a lot of sickness and death among them, so they are very careful.

How the Fire is Made.

The ground has been cleaned, nothing unclean has been left on the ground. Some clean dirt, about a wash-pan full, is piled where the fire is to be made and smoothed down on top. Two lines are made, one going exactly north and south, the other going east and west on the top of the dirt. Some herbs are put in the spaces between the lines. Four, two and a half foot logs are placed with the ends touching in the center of this dirt. Then four roasting ears are placed between them.



- 6 -

They use a soft substance that forms in the cracks of trees and is similar to sponge to catch the sparks from the flint that is struck with a kind of file that fits around the hand.

More fuel is added to the fire as it is needed but all these things I have mentioned are completely burned. One fire is made when the first dance is to be held and is kept burning until the next Saturday morning. Then everything is cleared away and a new fire is built in the same way.

Stomp-Medicine.

There is a big wash pot of hot medicine of mixed herbs and a ten gallon jar of cold medicine made of red root. The men take partners and when one takes medicine, the other does, too. First, they drink from the hot pot, then from the cold jar and go out to vomit, as it cleans out the system thoroughly.

John Jacobs of Holdenville belongs to Tuckabatche town. He had a white friend and they were together almost all the time so this friend wanted to go take medicine but it was too strong for him; he had to go home after taking some. He was so weak that he had to go to bed for a while but when he got well he said he never had felt so good and was

- 7 -

strong as an ox. He had accumulated so much poison was why it worked him so hard.

An Indian's Heaven.

You know the two belong together - the Indian and the Stomp Dance. The Bible says there are just two places for a person to go after death. There would have to be a stomp ground for me to be happy. You couldn't see a stomp dance and not want to dance, too. I love to dance, and do every time that anyone else does. I belong to Keligia town but my wife is Arbecca town and church. The husband uses medicine in the wife's town as protection to her. I'm Coon and she is Tiger.

I believe the stomp way is better than the church for at church a woman is allowed to talk to any man she wants to and to be friends to all. At a Stomp Dance a woman is not allowed to talk to any man, not even to her husband. If something important comes up he must get permission before he can go talk to her and then only about business.

Barnett School.

One mile west and one south of Bryant was a split-log school furnished or started by Jim Barnett before 1895, taught by Tom Harper. White children were allowed to at-

BARNETT, NANCY GRAYSON.

INTERVIEW.

12128

- 8 -

tend as well as Indians and half-breed Indians and negroes.

Cemeteries.

There are lots of graves on the Pumpa West land a mile west of Jackson Barnett home, a mile south of Bryant.

James Barnett Cemetery.

Section 6, Township 10, Range 12, East.

Asberry Cemetery.

On Miley Asberry allotment - Section 32, Township 11, Range 12: Still in use.

Barnett Cemetery.

Section 29, Township 11, Range 12. Still in use.

No Name.

About a half mile south of the James Barnett farm on the same Section 6, Township 10, Range 12, there were fifty or sixty Indians and one white child buried there but they have all been plowed up.

Lewis Sharp, a school teacher, had a tombstone that has been broken down but is still there. The Dawes Commission told me that they would give me some more ground if I would give that for a grave-yard but they never did.

- 9 -

Booker Tee Cemetery

On Section 6, Township 10, Range 12, there is also a colored cemetery. Johnson of Bristow had the first store at Booker Tee. There were lots of folk there about ten years ago but not many now.

Old Trail.

An old trail from Texas to Seminole, Wetumka, Weleetka, to the Jim Barnett store, a half mile south of my place or house, went west of our house and east of Bryant. There was a crossing, ford, on Bad Creek east of the railroad bridge on the other side of Bryant. This trail continued on west of the Henryetta Cemetery, west of Shulter and on to Okmulgee.