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BERRY, GEORGE

INTERVIEW

#6898

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BERRY, GEORGE. INTERVIEW.

68398

Interviewed George Berry, Al Lillie
of Pawnee; and W. Allen, of Maramec.
Field Worker, James H. Fleming,
July 24, 1937.

OLD STAGE LINES NEAR PAWNEE

In 1881 some men named Searing and Meade of
Arkansas City ran a stage line carrying Government
mail from Arkansas City, Kansas via Chillico, Penea
City, and Red Rock to Pawnee. A man named Badger
was the driver, and this stage line operated until
the railroad was built south to Perry, Oklahoma.

About 1884 there was a stage route from Wharton,
or Perry, east to Pawnee. There was one stage stand
about half way to Pawnee. This line got many passen-
gers off the train at Perry. One of the drivers was
named Shorty Bixler or Pixler. This line operated
until about 1901.

Some of the earliest trading posts of Pawnee were
those of Messrs. Burgess, Matlock, and T. K. Berry.
Berry's was open in 1881.

In order to operate a trading post then one had
to secure permits from Senators Plumb and Ingalls,
who had been given that political authority by the
Department of the Interior. A Government Inspector
would visit the posts at regular intervals and make
reports.

A few of the traders moved in when the Indians did.

Before the railroad was built from Pawhuska toward Pawnee, a buckboard went over the route twice a week. The Arkansas was forded and later ferried near where Halston now is.

They would keep a man with teams and cables at the crossing to aid in the crossing when the river was high.

The four Indian villages of the Pawnees were the Grand, Toppaze, Republican, and the Skedee. These were known locally by other names. These villages were all within about two miles of each other.

Mr. Berry told of the first Indian near Pawnee to be buried according to the white man's custom, in a coffin. After the coffin was built the Indian's knees would stick up, preventing the lid, or top being put on. The whole end of the coffin was removed, thus permitting the feet to hang out. In this condition the procession and interment was conducted. This Indian was a brother of the "Sun Chief." He was Chief of the Indian Villages of Pawnee.

The Kickapoo Indians sometimes buried their dead in trees.

The Cherokees sometimes would dig a grave about eight feet deep and tamp the dirt down on top of the dead Indian. They thought if they failed to get all the dirt back in the hole another Indian would die immediately in the same manner as the one being buried.