

PARTON, LEONA.

INTERVIEW

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

PARTON, LEONA

INTERVIEW

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Field Worker's name Lillian Cassaway

This report made on (date) April 22 1938

1. Name Leona Parton

2. Post Office Address Anadarko, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 24 Year 1920

5. Place of birth Anadarko, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father Grayson Parton Place of birth Anadarko

7. Name of Mother Stella Ellis Parton Place of birth Anadarko

Other information about mother Mrs. Parton is a Delaware Indian and is a distant relative of Black Beaver.

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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Lillian Cassaway  
Investigator  
April 22, 1938.

Interview with Leona Parton  
Anadarko, Oklahoma.

My father, Grayson Parton, was born at Anadarko about 1863 and is still living. My mother, Stella Ellis Parton was born at Anadarko about 1888.

The Delaware Indians came from Pennsylvania and Ohio and are descendants of the Mohicans. William Penn made a treaty with the Indians (Delaware) that the white people and Delaware Indians would be friends as long as the grass grew and the waters ran. The word Delaware means "I said". When making the treaty Penn kept asking over what the Indian said and they used the word Delaware so much that they were called Delaware, though there is another name that is the true name. I can't pronounce it nor spell it for we always go by the name of Delaware.

We are distant relatives of Black Beaver on my mother's side of the family. Nearly all Delaware people are related in some way. There are only about two hundred of us left and a lot of us are mixed with the Caddo Indians. One reason we are

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so few is that so many of the Delaware Indians have inter-married with the Caddo<sup>es</sup> and eventually went with the Caddo tribe.

My mother used to wear the regular Indian dress but we children kept after her to change to the white man's dress. My father also used to dress like the Indians and had peyote feasts, but we have persuaded him to stop and now we live like the white people.

Our burial ceremonies are very similar to the Caddo rites. I can only tell this as my folks have told me for I have never really seen a burial like it. They march around the grave four times, dropping a little dirt in the grave as they go around. Then they must return to the grave every day for six days; this is because the spirit is supposed to linger around for that length of time.

The Delawares are the Indians who sold Manhattan Island for such a small price. There are still parts of Pennsylvania that belong to the Delaware Indians, though they have never claimed it.

My mother has been a witch woman and she still has her medicine which she keeps in a bag about twelve inches deep but

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never uses it any more. In this bag is a can and in the can is a little image of a man. There is some Indian tobacco also in the can and if anyone bothers with it he will go crazy. I have seen it once; my mother showed it to me a long time ago.

One time a man came and told my mother he wanted some meat. She told him to make a wish and hang this bag out somewhere and soon he would have a lot of visitors who would bring him something. He did as she said and it wasn't long until he had a lot of visitors and they brought him a lot of meat.

Another woman who is related to us has some witch medicine, too, and one time it was stolen from her. She had a Mexican cutting wood for her and she knew that he had taken it though she had no actual proof so she told him that she wanted him to bring it back. He said that he didn't have it but she knew that he did and she told him if he didn't bring it back that something would happen to him but he still said that he didn't have it. One day while he was cutting wood he nearly cut his foot off. He came back to the house and she asked him if he had brought the medicine back and he said "yes, here it is." His foot got well in no time at all.

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Before the World War this woman wanted to marry my uncle but he didn't want her so when he came back from the war she told him if she couldn't have him no other woman should. She made medicine and he went crazy. She told his relatives if they would give her something that she would cure him. My uncle told her that he wouldn't give her anything so this other uncle is still in a sanatorium.

Black Beaver built the little church out at Rock Spring. There is a story about the spring that goes like this. There was a boy and girl, orphans who had lived around among the Indians, first with one and then another, until no one wanted them. They went to this spring and on the rock the boy killed his sister and then himself. This locality is supposed to be haunted because of so many deaths there; all the old Indians say it is haunted. There has never been a white preacher in this church. There are so many old Indians that cannot understand English that the preachers always talk in the Indian language. The minister at the present time is Dick Smith, a Creek Indian.

Willis Thomas is our chief and my uncle, Belo Ellis, is our assistant chief.

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My father used to make all the feathered headdresses but he can't see to do anything like that now. The Delaware value the Eagle feathers. The women are not allowed to touch these feathers for the women are unworthy and are unclean so cannot touch the feathers. It is that way to this day.