

ROONEY, H. C. (MRS.)

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Investigator
November 29, 1938

Interview with Mrs. H. C. Rooney
104 West Alabama, Ardmore, Oklahoma.

KIOWA LEGENDS
Origin of the Kiowa Flute.

In the days, not so long ago, when Kiowa youth sought a mate he would go to a place near her tepee in the dusk and play love songs to her on a cedar flute. According to Leifurance, the composer of Indian songs, the Kiowa flute has the loveliest tone of any of the flutes made by so-called "uncivilized" people. My grandfather, Delos Lonewolf, who was the Great Chief of the Kiowas, told me this story of how the Kiowa flute came to be made.

Long, long ago, before the white man came, the Kiowas roamed the region of the Black Hills just east of the great western mountains. One day, Poor Boy, a young man, who was lonesome and unhappy because he had not many friends and could not win the girl he loved, wandered far from camp trying to forget his loneliness and when evening time overtook him, he lost his way. He wandered about until at last, tired,

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and hungry and sleepy, he sought shelter beneath the friendly branches of a cedar tree. He was lulled to sleep by the gentle whispers of the night wind through the cedar branches. It seemed to play a song, sweet and low.

During the night a storm came up and the rush of the wind through the cedar branches made a song, tempestuous and troubled, but beautiful—a storm song thought the young man, like the storm in his heart. Then a flash of lightning struck the tree tearing off one of the limbs and stunning the boy.

When dawn came, Poor Boy awakened and through his mind kept running the music he had heard. He picked up the torn limb and said to himself "Perhaps there is some way that I can get this limb to sing the music for me". He had seen the old men make whistles, so with his hunting knife, he began to work on the cedar branch in a similar way. He noticed that there were six holes in a straight row in the branch where some dead twigs had fallen off. These he dug out then smoothed the outside of the branch, then hollowed it out and cut a notch in it like that of a whistle. To finish it he tied it with strips of buckskin from his clothing.

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Then he reverently put his lips to this creation and blew his breath gently through it. The response was a high soft, sweet note like the gentle sighing of night breeze through the branches of the tree that had sheltered him. When he put his finger over one of the holes in the flute he found that it lowered the tone. He found that by uncovering and covering the six holes with his fingers he could make high and low notes at will. In a little while he could play the song he had heard during the night and his heart was made very happy, for with the flute and its love songs he won the girl of his desire.

To this day Kiowa flutes are made of the heart of cedar and tied with buckskin and the music they give forth is like that of the first flute-high or low, soft or loud, but always vibrant and sweet.

And that is the story of how the first Kiowa flute was made.

NOTE: This legend was written by a little girl for the Oklahoma Indian School Magazine, 1932. Her name is Ida Botone. She is a Kiowa girl thirteen years old. She is in school at the Catholic Mission just southwest of Anadarko.

Sindie and the Prairie Dogs.

Once upon a time there was a man named Sindie. He was a liar and a cheater. One day he was walking in a field looking for food, but he could not find any. On the other end of the field there was a prairie dog town. So he said to himself, "now this is where I get my meal." So he thought of a plan and went over to the town.

The prairie dogs were playing, and, smilingly, Sindie asked them if he might join in their play. They said he could and Sindie told them he would sing for them and they could all dance in a circle with their eyes closed. The prairie dogs thought that would be fun, and began to dance as they were told. As they were dancing, Sindie began to knock each one on the head. But the last two prairie dogs were small and curious and did not keep their eyes closed. They were watching Sindie knock the others on the head but before their time came they ran away. And that is why we still have prairie dogs to this day.

Sindie was mad but could not do anything about it. Then he started a fire and cooked them all. Just then a fox came along and, being hungry, planned to get some of

the meal. Pretending that he had a sore leg, he asked Sindie for something to eat. Sindie said, "No! You can't have anything to eat until you race me around the mountain there. If you beat me you can have everything. If you don't, why you can just go hungry," and he laughed.

Sindie was a very swift runner and the fox knew it so he said, "I can't run, I've got a sore leg." Then Sindie said, "I'll tie some heavy rocks on my legs to even it up." The fox said that was all right and tied the rocks on for Sindie. Then the race started. The fox let Sindie get ahead farther and farther and kept crying out that he couldn't catch up. Then all at once he turned around and ran back to the meal and ate it up. Sindie thought he was so far ahead of the fox that he could no longer hear him crying and kept on until he had run around the mountain. When he got back to the cooking place he saw he had been tricked by the fox and became very, very angry.

He could see the fox's greasy tracks wherever he stepped and so trailed him to where he was hiding on the limb of a tree hanging over a creek. Sindie saw the fox reflected in

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the water and thought he was in the creek and jumped at him. The water was shallow and Sindie hit his head against a rock so hard it stunned him a minute. When he got up he was so angry that he picked up a sharp round rock, climbed the tree chased the fox out to the end of the limb and caught him and hacked and scraped on his nose with the rock until it was very long and sharp. That is why the fox's nose is sharp to this day.

NOTE: This legend was written by two fourteen year old boys, who attend the Catholic Mission for the Oklahoma Indian School Magazine 1932, Rickey Laubity and Kenneth Hagg.

Sane Pete and Sindie

Once there was a boy named Sane Pete. He had a grandma who always knew what to do, no matter what happened.

One day the chief said to his people, "There is an eagle in that tree. The one that hits it shall marry my prettiest daughter and the one that comes nearest to it shall marry my other daughter".

Sane Pete heard this, so he ran home and told his grandmother to make him some arrows and a bow. She started working right away. She made the arrows out of bones and the bow out of wood. Then she mixed some kind of Indian medicine and put

it on the string of the bow. When it was finished she told Sane Pete to tell it something. Sane Pete said, "The first arrow shall miss the eagle, the second arrow shall tip the eagle, and the third shall hit it in the heart".

In the morning at dawn the contest began. Sane Pete was the first one there so he got to shoot first. An Indian named Sindie, who always wanted to play a joke on somebody, was next to Sane Pete. When Sane Pete shot, the first one missed, the second one tipped the eagle, and the third one hit it. Then he went to the chief and while the chief was talking to him, Sindie took out the arrow and put it in his own bow and went to the chief. Sindie told the chief that he was the one who had hit the eagle, so he was given the prettiest daughter. Sane Pete took the other daughter.

Sane Pete went to his grandmother and told her to bathe him and put in the medicine that makes people clean, neat and good looking. She mixed it up and put it in the wooden bucket. Then Sane Pete got into it. The first time he came up he said, "Grandma, do I look all right?" She answered, "Not good enough." Then he went under again and asked the same thing when he came up, but his grandma said, "Pretty good,

but not good enough." The third time he came up she said he looked very good.

When he was ready he put on his best blanket and went by the chief's tent. The daughters saw him and exclaimed, "Oh! see the good looking boy." Sane Pete went to the tent and told them who he was.

He told the chief to put out his hands and he would do something wonderful, so the chief did as he was told. Sane Pete spit out apples and many other things. Sindie tried to do the same thing but nothing came out except spit.

When the chief saw this he became angry and chased Sindie out of his tent. So Sane Pete got the prettiest daughter after all and he did not have to cheat either.

NOTE: This legend was written for the Oklahoma Indian School Magazine 1932, by a twelve year old boy, Kenneth Anquoe.