

RUSH, FRANK, SR. (MRS.) INTERVIEW

10392

181

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

182

RUSH, FRANK, SR. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

#10392

Field worker's name Bessie L. Thomas

This report made on (date) March 31 1938

Story

1. This ~~legend~~ was secured from (name) Mrs. Frank Rush, Sr.,

Address Craterville Park, Cache, Oklahoma

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4

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Bessie L. Thomas
Investigator
March 31, 1938.

Interview with Mrs. Frank Rush, Sr.,
Craterville Park, Cache, Oklahoma.

HISTORY OF A BATTLE PAINTED ON BUCKSKIN.

This is the story of a battle painted in natural colors on buckskin. This picture was bought by my husband, Frank Rush, Sr., from Mrs. W. B. Cox who lived in Cache. Both my husband and Mrs. Cox are now deceased.

It is framed under glass and hangs in the Indian Historical Museum at Craterville Park, owned by my son and me. It was painted for W. B. Cox, of Fort Sill in August 1909, by Haw-gone, a full blood Kiowa Indian who lived at Mt. Scott. It is historical for the Indians, having no written language, preserve the history of events by drawings and pictures, usually on buckskin, which they can read at sight as easily as other people can read print. This painting was copied from pictures made by Haw-gone's father, To-haw-sen, who was a participant in the battles written on this buckskin in pictures which show all Indians, horses, buffalo, dogs, trees and all other objects painted in their natural colors at this time.

RUSH, FRANK, SR. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW

#10392

-2-

This painting represents three different battles between the Kiowa and Ute Indian and was interpreted as follows by Havgone. In the middle or center portion, are seen Kiowa tepees. A man on horseback is swimming a river; a Kiowa chief, Big Bow, is on foot with a bow in his hand. The man in front of him on horseback is a Ute Chief, Turkey Tracks. The contending forces on both sides in this battle are represented by their respective chiefs, Big Bow and Turkey Tracks.

About 1855 the Kiowas were camped high up and in the timber on the South Canadian River when one day a man on picket duty came running into camp out of breath and reported to his chief that the Utes, several hundred strong, were advancing on their camp for the purpose of giving them battle. This caused a great confusion and the picket was sent by his chief, from one tepee to another with the word, until everyone in camp was warned. The squaws immediately began gathering up what personal belongings they could easily carry on their backs, together with the papooses, in case they had to make a hasty getaway farther in the woods. After all the squaws were gathered in a bunch, Chief Big Bow decided to go out and meet and engage the Utes in battle before

RUSH, FRANK, SR. (MRS.) INT. VIEW #10392

-3-

they reached his camp. Accordingly, early in the morning he gathered his warriors and crossed the river below his camp at a ford as indicated by the horse tracks leaving the camp. After leaving the river some three or four miles they met the Utes and immediately began the battle. After fighting some time, Chief Big Bow saw that the Utes were too strong for him and that the only thing he could do was to hold them in check as much as possible until he could have the squaws, children and the old men removed to a place of safety. In order to do this he dispatched a man on a fast horse with instructions to take the nearest route to camp and tell his people to abandon camp and take refuge higher up in the hills. This man is the one seen in picture swimming the river on horseback in order to get to camp as quickly as possible.

Big Bow succeeded in holding the Utes back until the camp was abandoned after which he recrossed the river at the same ford he had used that morning, with the Utes pressing him hard. He made another stand at the camp, but the Utes again drove him back, burned the entire camp, then killed and scalped an old blind man who had been overlooked and left in a tree when the camp was abandoned.

RUSH, FRANK, SR. (MRS.) INTERVIEW #10392

-4-

While the Utes were burning the camp the Kiowas stopped a short distance off and Poor Bear, a second chief, tried to get the Kiowa chief and his followers to charge, but they refused as they were outnumbered, so Poor Bear made the charge by himself and killed one Ute, escaping unhurt.

After burning the camp, the Utes abandoned pursuit and the Kiowas gathered up their women and children and moved further west to start a new camp.

There were about one hundred-fifty Kiowas and one hundred Utes killed in this battle, which lasted most of one day.