

SMITH, JOHN REDBIRD AND SAM.

INTERVIEW #6255

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Interview with
John Redbird and Sam Smith
Gore, Oklahoma.

While visiting John Redbird Smith and his brother, Sam, east of Gore I noticed what pretty sons and daughters they had. At Sam's home there were three small sons and daughters, all happily playing with Indian toys and swinging from the grape vines that hung from the trees.

Many of the fullblood Cherokees live in log houses, some with two log rooms but the majority with only one room. They usually have a brush arbor, either connected with or built near the entrance. The cooking and eating during the summer months is done under this arbor, except when it rains. Some of the fire place chimneys are built of split logs but most of them are built of native sandstone.

Most of the Indians are fond of coffee, but make it much weaker than the white people do. Some of the full bloods have no dishes, but place the pot of meal or corn and beans on a rude table under the arbor, the family gathers around with a ladle and each one helps himself. Some eat out of tin cups and clean coffee cans. Another

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article of food used by different tribes of Indians while on a journey is called cold flour; it is made of corn gathered while the grain is soft on the cob. Some of the new corn is dried in the hot sun for several days and when thoroughly dry it is then parched and pounded into a powder, then they place a few spoons of flour in a cup of water sweetened with sugar and add to it:

In the early days they used to make war upon each other, and they could neither build fires nor shoot game on these expeditions for fear of a surprise attack by their foes. This food satisfied their want for several days at a time.

Indians are great lovers of tobacco, and Sam had a patch of tobacco just a few feet east of his cabin. This patch is about one hundred feet square. This will last the family all winter for chewing and smoking. Fullbloods never smoke when they are in company without taking a few puffs and passing the pipe to their nearest companion, who in turn does the same thing. Many of them grow their own tobacco for smoking with which they mix equal parts of

white sumac leaves after they are dried and powdered.

This compound is famous for its fragrance.

Sam Smith has quite a few angora goats which roam on the free range. The day we were there some of his children were riding a large goat. The children also had a homemade two wheel cart which was made from cultivator wheels and native poles. The body was made from oak clap board.

Sam Smith showed me the pipe in which he smokes his home grown tobacco; it is made of soap-stone and was very light in weight.

He had a fish gig hanging in a black-jack tree in front of his home. The gig was hooked on a limb and at the lower end of the wooden part he had three iron plow points tied which keeps the wood from warping in the hot sun. This handle which he used in the gig was about fourteen feet long, and in one piece and was made out of black locust timber.