

SHAKYA, CHARLEY

INTERVIEW.

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

6492

Field Worker's name Jefferson BerryhillThis report made on (date) June 17, 1937Name Charley SnakeyaPost Office Address Okmulgee, OklahomaResidence address (or location) 1/2 southeast of Okmulgee, Oklahoma

DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Place of birth _____

Name of Father David Snakeya Place of birth _____Other information about father full blood Creek Indian, Died in 1908Name of Mother Mollyanna Nero Place of birth _____Other information about mother died at age of 41, in 1922

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 _____.

Jefferson Berryhill,
Field Worker,
June 17, 1937.

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Interview with Charley Snakeya
Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

Mr. Charley Snakeya was born seven miles west of Okmulgee County, in the year of 1907, and now lives a mile and a half southeast of the town of Okmulgee, Oklahoma. He is a full blood Creek Indian and twenty-nine years old.

His father, David Snakeya, a full blood Creek Indian, died at the age of fifty-two, in 1908. Emetalw Cussetah, clan was coon. His mother, Mollyanna Nero. She died at the age of forty-one in 1922. Clan deer, town Emetalw was talwa-rakko. Grandmother, Louisa Nero. Clan deer, town Talwa-rakko. Age and death unknown. Mr. Snakeya is a participant in the green corn dance, he is familiar with the occasion.

The green corn dance is a harvest celebration, handed down from generation to generation. It is usually held in the summer during the harvest of corn. The date is set to clean the Cuko-rakko (big house) dance ground. On the date set they gather and sweep the whole dancing ground, which is a circle about thirty feet in diameter. The ashes where the fire was built during past year is swept up and cleaned. There are three arbors for the different clans and visitors.

The campers moved in day before the celebration. The first day the men drink redroot (Misso Hoyaneco) and sit under the arbors. No one is allowed to eat anything or leave. They drink redroot and vomit all day to clean out the system. That is before eating the corn and the women drink the redroot and vomit or some just wash their faces with it. In doing this, they turn toward the east, to vomit easier, this goes on all day. During the afternoon the medicine man starts scratching every man who participates with an animal's tooth or a needle on the forearm four times, skin deep, so it will bleed, that includes the children, to live healthy. During the evening a fire is built by a picked man who had taken part in the occasion. When the fire is built, they look on; then that man picks up the coals and hands them to the women to build the fires in the camp houses, it being the first fire built. When the fire is built, four ears of roasting ears of corn are laid on the fire pointing north, east, south and west for feeding the fire or celebrating. Then the men who drank medicine all day goes to the river to swim or wash the impurities from their bodies before eating, also a collection is gathered to pay the medicine man. After the bath they come in and eat. After that, two men are selected to go around and ask the man to lead in the dance. That's their

work, to go around the fire three or four times and call out the man who had agreed to lead. That goes on till midnight and two men take their place for the balance of the night. During the drinking of medicine, the men dance and the women also dance. The dances are named as Buffalo, Garfish, Crow, Duck and Feather dance by holding hands together with women and also the women have the dance leader. To notify the man of the coming celebration, seven sticks of wood is sent to him, the sticks representing a week. He throws away a stick a day till all the sticks are gone and reports at the stamp ground ready to take part in the celebration. A person must not eat corn until he has celebrated or he will get sick. If he has eaten the corn, he must pay or give some quilts or tobacco; he has paid his fine then. The turtle shells are used by women in the dance. The men who talk or play with the women folks are subjected to pay a fine; and to drink any whiskey is against medicine rules. Also a horse dance is danced; a tom-tom is pound on all the time and a pot or a crock of redroot is set aside for the visitors to drink or wash their faces with. During the first day a squirrel soup is eaten; the squirrel bones are thrown around the dance ground to save or cherish the medicine. The dance is all through the night. The fire is kept up. Different leaders lead the dance. It is a pleasure and enjoyment all night and play ball next day.