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Shawnee
Kickapoos
Indian trade

FIELD WORKER: Harry M. Dreyer

BIOGRAPHY OF J. Readus
 615 NE. Second Street
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

J. Readus was born in the year of 1864 on the Readus plantation, from which he secured his name. He never saw his father. When he was 16 years old, he began work with a brick yard at Birmingham, Alabama. Later his mother bought 80 acres of land in Limestone county for \$300, and J. Readus bought a jenny from a horse and mule yard for \$12.00, which he used to farm his mother's farm. His mother had two other boys that fought in the Civil War and were killed. His mother received \$1,900 compensation from the Government, which they took to this farm around 1886. They planned to leave for the North, but because of sense or fear of J. Readus, they left sooner than they had at first planned. The night following the day of their departure, racketeers and Klu Kluxers, so Readus states, entered the farm and tore the entire floor out of the house and out buildings, digging for the money his mother received. Many things were ransacked but there were a few fat hogs left in the pen.

J. Readus returned to his friend's house where his mother stayed over night and brought news to her. They immediately left for Chatanooga, Tennessee, and there took train to Evanston, Illinois, then to St. Louis and on to Kansas City. J. Readus made his home in Kansas City until 1889, when he came with his mother of Oklahoma City, and filed on a claim east of the city. His mother died in Shawnee in 1903. J. Readus secured a job with a man by the name of Robinson, who ran a grocery store at Shawnee. He worked there 14 years. He assisted in making deliveries of groceries to

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Indians on the agency. After the order was put in by Chief, and upon delivery each Indian would know his bundle, they were very honest with each other and had a very good memory. Kickapoo Indians cut wood and delivered it to market for living. They wore leather leggings tied around the waist by string and women wore red shawls. They would come to town many times, several dozen together and again only few together. Sometimes they would walk and again ride depending whether they owned horse and wagon. The mother would carry the small child on back, and when walking husband would make her sit down and rest every so often, as she grew tired. Many times there would be 10 or 12 Indian men on a small spring wagon pulled by a team, come to town together.

Some of the Indians had guns others had large bow and arrows. They used axes received from white men to cut wood. A group of Kickapoo Indians would buy a steer together and kill and divide it on the hide where they killed it. They always had their interpreter with them.

Readus after 14 years came to Oklahoma City and worked in a saloon, where they would collect money from Indians over counter, and Chief would tell them to set whiskey out and they would set it as they went home. Many times it would be left all day before it was taken up, after the sale was paid for. Also recall Indian painting pony pink they not knowing it was not natural color when first seeing it.

J. Readus is now janitor for Baptist church at \$10.00 a month, and able bodied for his age.

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