

ROACH, JOHN

INTERVIEW

10646

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

ROACH, JOHN                      INTERVIEW                      10646

Field worker's name Bessie L. Thomas,

This report made on (date) May 2, 1958

1. This legend was  
secured from (name) John Roach,

Address Cache, Oklahoma.

This person is (male ~~or female~~) White, ~~or~~ 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 3

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Bessie L. Thomas,  
Investigator,  
May 2, 1938.

Interview with John Roach,  
Cache, Oklahoma.

In the year 1901, just after the Opening, I moved with my family to Lawton, Oklahoma, coming from the Chickasaw Nation where I had worked as a cow hand and where each year I kept adding to my own herd of cattle until by 1901, I had quite a nice bunch of white faces.

Before getting entirely located in this new country my entire herd of cattle were stolen. So I left my family as comfortably located as I could to go in search of them.

The country was very wild, no fences, roads, pastures, or other signs of civilization, except an Indian camp, here and there, along the streams. I had a very disagreeable search for my stock, not knowing which direction to go, so just started out.

On my journey, day after day, I met up with only Indians. They could not speak my language nor I theirs but very little, so it was hard to make them understand

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just what I was searching for.

One night after I had been away from home about a month I had my first experience with the Indians in their home. As the night was cold, I selected an embankment, made my fire and sat with my back to the bank for protection from the bitter cold wind. While sitting by the fire, trying to thaw out, I looked up and though I had not heard a footstep, there before me stood three Indians.

After some difficulty in talking and sign making they made me understand that they wanted me to spend the night with them. On arriving at their home, a tepee, and on entering, I saw the old as well as young women, men, and children, seated on cow and buffalo hides, placed on the ground. The women and men played some kind of hand game with sticks. The children amused themselves in some other manner. They all talked and laughed together in their native custom and some tried to talk to me, chattering and making signs.

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On going to bed, the women gathered in one tent and I was given a cowhide to sleep on which was spread over some weeds on the ground. Indian blankets were used as cover. About four of these same kind of beds were made down in the tepee where I was to sleep, the men and boys sleeping here too.

The next morning, little was done about cleaning up the tepee. For breakfast a large pot of boiled beef was placed in the center of the tepee and after what I imagine was prayer, with all sitting on the ground on the sides of the cowhide beds, wooden spoons were passed to each person and all ate from the pot as no plates or bowls were used. The spoons had been whittled out and smoothed like glass by the Indians.

After finishing my breakfast I thanked the Indians the best I could and went on my way, grateful, indeed, that I did not have to spend that cold night out in the open.