

ROACH, ADA M.

INTERVIEW

#6489

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ROACH, MRS. ADA M.

- INTERVIEW.

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Form A-(S-149)

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

Field Worker's name Jerome K. Emmons

This report made on (date) June 28, 1937.

1. Name Mrs. Ada M. Roach.

2. Post Office Address Box 5, Schulter, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) One block west of post office.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 31 Year 1890.

5. Place of birth Tiger Flats west of Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

6. Name of Father George W. Tiger Place of birth Okmulgee.

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother Rose McNac Place of birth Grave Creek.

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

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 8.

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Jerome M. Emmons,  
Interviewer.

Interview With Mrs. Ada M. Roach,  
Box 5 Schuller, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Roach taught in the Schuller School at one time,  
and lives one block west of the post office there.

I was born on my Grandfather's place at Tiger Flats,  
southwest of Okmulgee, on July 31, 1890. Mr. Johnson  
Tiger, now deceased, was my uncle. Mrs. Susan Tiger, who  
now resides at Henryetta, is my step-mother.

I am on the rolls as seven-eighths Creek and a member  
of the Big Cussetah Town. We always take our mother's  
town as our own. My mother died when I was quite young.

#### SCHOOLING.

I attended the Muya Mission for six years and then  
attended the Sacole Indian University, now called Sacole  
College, for four years.

#### FARMING.

My father was quite an extensive farmer. He had a  
section under fence at one time and had to plant crops in  
order to keep it so. The Muscogee or Creek law wouldn't  
permit land to be fenced unless it was in cultivation.

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## GAME.

My father went on long hunting trips before his marriage, but only hunted locally afterwards. He went with friends and would camp and stay away for weeks. One time he got lost at night from the rest and wasn't found until late the next morning.

He got lots of turkeys and deer meat, which was dried. I never cared much for the venison. It was usually dark, tough meat and I preferred other game.

The hunters then usually went on horseback, but if the nature of the land permitted they would sometimes take wagons.

We would go on fishing trips and use the Devil's shoestring to aid in catching the fish. This plant is growing on my allotment. This is so called because of the long, slender roots.

They would dam up the river and get out in the water and pound the roots between two rocks. In a short time the larger fish would rise and the small ones die. They seemed to go crazy and were easy to spear or shoot with an arrow, which had a string attached which prevented loss of the arrow.

In these killings, each person was allotted a certain number of bundles of Devil's shoestring to bring.

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## HORSES.

My father had about fifty or seventy-five horses. Of course, this number varied as the herd was being added to and sold or stolen. He had lots of saddles stolen also.

## TRADING POSTS.

When I was a girl there were no trading posts. The nearest villages were Okmulgee and Wetumka, where my parents traded.

## EARLY OKMULGEE.

When I was about four years of age, we moved into Okmulgee. We lived in Doctor Bell's house on Main Street.

There was only the two stores which were owned by Captain Severs and Parkinson; a blacksmith shop and the post office, with Jim Roper as postmaster. A little later, a saddle shop was put in by Will Roberts; the Creek Capital Hotel established and still later, the Hightower Hotel, which was run by Lydia Hightower who married Mark Moore.

## FRIENDLY INDIANS.

The only Indians that I remember, when a child, were some Seminoles and Choctaws coming here to catch the stage

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coach, which ran to Muskogee. The Creek Capital Hotel was the meeting place for the coach. It ran to the Half-way Store, where it was met by another coach from Muskogee. They would exchange passengers, change horses and make the return trip.

#### STOMP DANCES.

In preparation for the Stomp Dances, the strongest young men of the tribe were sent out to gather roots for the medicine used. They weren't to take any tools or comforts with them. They were to sleep on the bare ground and dig the roots with their hands.

The men would go off and drink the medicine on an empty stomach, change clothing after bathing and then sat down to a feast prepared by the women.

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At night they began dancing. The men and women each had a leader. The men wore a feather and the women four turtle shells, which contained a few pebbles, on each ankle. The shells aided the tom tom in making music for the dancers. They danced frequently all night.

#### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

The tom tom or drum, was the only Creek musical instrument that I know of.

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My father's town was Eufaula. They had a tom-tom, made of a cedar root, which was supposed to have been brought here over the Trail of Tears, from Florida or Georgia. It was supposed to be kept by the oldest member of the clan for the dances and on his death passed on. It came into my father's possession and at his death it was hanging on the wall at our home. After the funeral it was gone and we never knew who took it. I had wanted to keep it. I suppose, even if we had kept it out of sight, as it was intended that it be kept, we would have been asked for it.

## CREEK ORPHANAGE.

My grandfather, John Tiger, was superintendent of

the Creek Orphanage northeast of Okmulgee for four years.

My father, George Tiger, was superintendent four years.

My uncle, John Tiger, was also superintendent for

four years. The members of the Creek Indian Board of

Education at that time were named superintendent of the

orphans, were: Paul Valentine and Chesley Miller.

John's son, Van Allen, now lives in Henryetta.

## CREEK COUNCILS.

When I first remember, Pleasant Porter was the Chief

and my grandfather was second Chief. The members of each

town voted on members of the clan to represent them in the House of Kings and the House of Warriors.

After Pleasant Porter died, my grandfather was appointed by President "Teddy" Roosevelt to be Principal Chief of the Cree Nation. This was after statehood and tribal government was abolished. My grandfather was called to Washington and would sometimes stay for months at a time looking after tribal affairs.

#### TRADITIONS.

I have been told that the old Cree used to sleep with their bed north and south, rather than east and west. They thought that they slept better by going with the earth's crossing, rather than parallel to the earth's line of travel.

The old method of making rain was to spank a turtle.

When children were bad, they were warned that the "hokka" man would mark their arms. He was about the same as the "Pogey" man is to the white children.

#### INDIAN NAMES.

My grandfather and his two brothers weren't named. Yet, when they went with their father to cross a stream. One tried and he fell back, so they called him I-sluts-ka;



one of the others tried and he fell in, as he was called A-sluts-ka; my grandfather was the first to cross, so he was called Ho-mo Ti-a-gee. When my grandfather first went to school the teacher couldn't pronounce his name. She changed it to Doty Tiger.

Children were also named for missionaries, etc. Stoddard, out near Muyaka, was named for a missionary.

#### CRAZY SNAKE.

I remember when they were taking the followers of Crazy Snake to Muskogee. There would be one snake and one soldier. They cut their hair off there. I heard that Chitto Harjo nearly cried when he lost his hair.

Lots of people don't know whether Harjo is dead or not. I have never heard of his death.

My uncle was a Crazy Snake; that is, he didn't wish to be allotted land. He, like the others called Crazy Snakes, wanted to be free to move anywhere he wished on the land owned by the Creek Nation.

#### BURIAL GROUNDS.

The Creeks always dug the grave the day of the funeral. They would always cover it with a tent or something to keep out the rain, if it had to be left uncovered, sometimes

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they would burn wood in it until it was dry if it got wet despite their efforts. Many graves also have a sort of dog house built over them to keep the rain from the grave.

One of my friends said he saw Tom Chickasaw, when he was executed. He was put into the casket and shot and the casket lowered into the grave and covered.

#### BURIED TREASURE.

Mrs. Mary West told me that an Indian was supposed to have drowned two slaves, who helped him carry his wealth to the river and bury it when he went away to fight in the Civil War. He wanted it to be safe until his return. He never returned; according to the natives around Hichita, where it is supposed to be buried.

Many of them have looked for this hidden treasure without success.