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INDEX CARDS

Old Oklahoma
Caldwell, Kansas
El Reno, 1890
Indian Medicine Man
Indian Customs
Beef Issues

ADAMS, MARGARET CRING.

INTERVIEW.

8499.

Anna R. Barry, Interviewer.
September 15, 1937.

Interview with Margaret (Cring) Adams,
401 South Evans Street, El Reno.
Born September 28, 1855.
Father-Baton Cring
Mother-Catherine Headrick

I was born in Jay County, Indiana, on September 28, 1855. I attended a rural school near our ^{farm} home. One thing I shall always remember is how my parents taught us to be thrifty in such an odd manner. There were six of us children in the farm home and money was none too plentiful. Twice a year father made out large orders from the mail order catalogue. Each member of the family was given permission to select one article. It could be useful or a trifle, but it must come under a certain price limit, and it was all we were permitted to buy for six months. No matter how we yearned for something else later, we had made our choice and must abide by it. We all made foolish selections at first. As for instance, the time I got a wax doll, a beautiful delicately tinted creature that I couldn't enjoy. In warm weather

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she melted, and in cold weather she cracked so I had to keep her wrapped in cotton. One unfortunate day a smaller sister took a large bite out of one lovely cheek. Another was the time a brother bought a beautiful box of candy and hid it away, refusing to share it, nibbling sparingly at it, until one day he found it all spoiled and unfit to eat. Finally we learned to spend days looking through the catalogue, and to study our future needs and select wisely.

My mother died when I was thirteen years old, but father kept our little home together. At the age of seventeen (or in 1872), I married a doctor by the name of Joseph Adams who lived near our little country home.

In 1890, my husband made up his mind to try his luck in Oklahoma. He said this was a new country, and no doubt doctors were few, and he really thought he could do lots for humanity. So, like all other home seekers we started out in a covered wagon and team, loaded with a few nice pieces of furniture, our bedding, a few cooking utensils

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and enough food to last several weeks. Our family consisted of my husband, ~~our~~ son and only child, who was seventeen years old at this time, and myself.

After we had left Caldwell a day or two, three young men overtook us on horseback. We were cooking our noon meal on an open fire, and these young men didn't have any food with them, so my husband told them they might eat with us. They said that they would be glad to and they would gladly have paid us for it, but we told them they could help with the preparing of the meal and we would all eat together. My husband and I started setting the grub out of the wagon on the ground under a tree close to the campfire. Among some of the things we set out was a quart of very strong homemade vinegar. As my husband set it against the tree, he said, in a very solemn way, "Boys, this is a very good quart

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of whiskey, please don't touch it, for I will need it in my doctoring when I get located? A few minutes later, my husband and I had gone down in a little ravine to get some wood. When we started back we came in sight of the camp fire in time to see one of these young men putting this bottle to his head to take a big drink of what they thought was whiskey. Of all the coughing and strangling you ever heard, one of the other boys had to pat him on the back. It was ^{too} funny for words, and we all broke in a loud roar.

We arrived in El Reno some time during the month of February, 1890. Doctor Adams located his office and a drug store combined at 106 South Choctaw Street, in a little frame building. My husband had a very good practice, sometimes going on calls as far as forty miles away. He traveled with a horse and buggy in those days, oftentimes he would be gone from home three or four days at a time. During our first few years in this country the

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Indians had the malaria very badly in their camp. I remember my husband telling about going out to a camp of Indians on the North Canadian River where the Indian medicine men were in charge. Dr. Adams said the medicine men had a tent erected near the bank of the river and they took the sick patient into this tent. Here they had large tubs of water and outside they would heat rocks very hot then plunge them into the water. This caused a steam to form inside the tent which caused the patient to perspire. After about an hour of this they plunged their patient into the river. Many Indians died of malaria fever that year.

During the early days we had friends to visit us from the eastern states but it was very seldom they ever saw an Indian and they felt so afraid of them. I always managed to take them to Darlington to see the Indians and to visit their camps. Most of the Indians knew me and when we came into their camp they would all gather around me patting me on the back, all talking in their native language, all at the same time. My friends would draw back from the crowd and they often told me they were ready to run. However, I always explained that they were

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good people and some of my best friends were Indians and are even today. I have Indian friends who come to visit me and spend a week at a time in my home.

My eastern friends often went down to the North Canadian River on a hot summer afternoon to watch the Indians who were camped up and down the river. We often sat on the river banks for hours watching the Indians teach their young children to swim. They would take the child from one year and a half or two years old, pick it up throw it in the river and tell it to swim. The little fellows would always manage to reach the bank and the parents would let the child rest, then throw it back in again. Sometimes they would throw twigs in the river and tell the children to bring it to them. We have witnessed this event when the river would be up and even men would be afraid to swim it.

My friends thought the beef issues were the cruelest things they had ever witnessed. At these beef issues the cattle stood in the pens twelve hours before the slaughter and the Indians would inspect the cattle and make their selections. As soon as they were released, the bucks would chase them on horseback, shooting at

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them with rifles, shotguns, revolvers or arrows. After the animal was down the squaws would appear on the scene with their large knives. Sometimes the little papooses would fret and the old squaw would cut a small piece of raw beef or liver and give it to the child to eat. When the squaws had finished cutting the meat, they would usually throw it in the back of the wagon on some hay, or if they were horseback, they would place it on the horse's back, get upon the horse, and leave.

One time while in my husband's office a bunch of Indians were waiting for Doctor Adams to come in from a call. These Indians were all seated on the floor with their backs resting against the wall. All of a sudden they all began to talk in their language and seemed very excited. I became curious to find out what it was all about and I looked out and saw a dog which some of the boys had been chasing lying in the street dead. I told them that was nothing to get excited about and they said, "Good doggie, heap good meat." Two of the Indian squaws went out, picked the dog up and went over and put it in their wagon which was hitched across the street from our office.

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When we left our old home in Coalwater, Ohio, I was very sad and felt that if I traveled the world over I could never find a place I would like as well. But today, in our nice old home which we have lived in for twenty years, I can truly say I am enjoying living in El Reno and Canadian County as well.

ADAMS, SARAH (Wash)

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

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ADAMS, SARAH (Wash) INTERVIEW 6258

Field Worker's name Jerome H. Ammons

This report made on (date) June 10 1937

1. Name Mrs. Sarah Wash Adams

2. Post Office Address Route 2, Box 17, Beggs, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) Two miles south of Beggs, Oklahoma

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month August Day 12 Year 1871

5. Place of birth Okmulgee, Oklahoma

6. Name of Father Rosey Castile Place of birth Mexico

Other information about father Mexican

7. Name of Mother Willie Calahan Place of birth Okmulgee, Indian Territory

Other information about mother Heart Creek Indian

Sam Calahan was mother's father

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 Six.