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

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Field worker's name Bessie L. Thomas

This report made on (date) April 11 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Dick Banks

Address Marlow, Oklahoma

This person is (male or ~~female~~ White, ~~Negro~~, ~~Indian~~,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story was originally told

to Mr. Banks by a Kiowa Indian

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 16

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Bessie L. Thomas,
Investigator,
April 11, 1938.

An Interview with Mr. Dick Banks,
Marlow, Oklahoma.

Legend of a Trader of Indian Wares.

This Irish Trader of Indian wares, of an early day, was located at the foot of the Caprocks, of Llano Estacado on the staked Plains of Texas. The store was conveniently located to catch the migrating Indian trade, north, south, east, and west on the headwaters of the double Mountain Fork of the Brazos River where there was always plenty of grass, water, and fuel and wild game in abundance. His wares and merchandise consisted of sharp hatchets, axes, ammunition, Indian beads, and blankets. All Indian tribes for miles, and miles around, Mexicans, and outlaws, traded with this man.

Mickey O'Casey, whose Indian name was Eck-I-Pop-Py, meaning red-head, knew everyone for miles around and had befriended many a human floater that had come to his store. Yet no one seemed to know O'Casey, where he came from, who

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he really was, or how long he had been there. He was alone, a tall, slender, red-headed, sandy complexioned Irishman with a pleasing smile, and plenty of ready Irish wit, liked by everyone, yet feared by some.

The different tribes of Indians were having some trouble among themselves over the coveted hunting ground. They would have skirmishes, steal one another's women and hold them for ransom, or sell them to other tribes. They would get all the horses they could, through stealth, or other ways, using strategy in keeping well mounted themselves, and in keeping as many of their enemies as possible afoot.

Around Mickey's Trading Post things had been very quiet for the past few months but he never knew when he would have a big trade or rush. One day, while standing in his door looking out across the plains, he could see objects in the distance which he took to be Indians, coming his way. Shortly they drew near, dismounted and it proved to be old Left-Hand, a Comanche warrior, who had behind him on his riding horse, two Indian girls of ages from five to ten years. He took them off the horse unbound their limbs, half-pulled, and half-dragged them towards the trading post. Outraged at their stubborn

resistance, he began to slap and kick them, and abuse them in the Comanche language. The children, of course, were very frightened, not knowing when the end would come. They defied him in every way, but did not shed a tear. These two little girls were of the Kiowa Tribe.

The trader, watching this brutal outrage, felt his helplessness in making any attempt to take the part of the children, knowing that to incur the ill-will of this noted and heartless warrior would mean death to him. O'Casey ventured up near Left-hand and his two captives and the war Chief said to him, "You like em squaw? Give me two sharp hatchets, you catch-em, two squaws."

Mickey, with all his daring ancestry behind him, was facing a cross of fire. He would have been more than willing to accept the trade with old Left-hand, but was afraid if caught with these Indian girls by their own people he would be killed. His hesitancy in accepting the trade seemed to outrage Left-hand more than ever. He reached into his belt and gripping his knife with his right hand and one of the girls in his left, he was in the act of cutting her head off. This

was too much for Mickey. If two hatchets would save the lives of these two little helpless humans, he was going to risk the consequences of the future. Immediately after he gave the hatchets to the Left-hand, he mounted his horse and he and his comrades rode away, leaving the trader and the two little helpless girls. Mickey, immediately released the things that bound their hands, tried to calm their fears and let them into the back of his store where he had sleeping quarters. He administered to their bruises as best he could and the little girls responded to his kind treatment and thought he meant them no harm. They were offered food, of which they would not partake but did drink freely of water. On placing them in a separate room where he had a bed made of blankets and buffalo robes, the girls seemed to understand this was a place to sleep. Night was approaching and soon the little girls were fast asleep. The trader however, could not rest, fearing that a war party would soon be on the trail of Left-hand and his late captives.

In the morning the trader and the two girls arose early. The girls did not seem to fear him, yet they were in a strange

place, alone with this paleface and they were uneasy, restless, and did not know what the future held for them. Mickey prepared breakfast in his rude way. Knowing the habits of Indians he prepared plenty of jerked buffalo meat, tortillas, and black coffee of which the two little girls partook freely, this being the first food they had eaten in the two days. Mickey, found both himself and the girls in a strange predicament as they could not understand each other in any of the many dialects which he knew.

Nothing happened around the trading post for some time so Mickey put in his time and effort in trying to win the confidence of his two little friends. He seemed to be making great headway along this line and after a sojourn of one moon the older of the girls would go to the spring back of the post and bring in water from the spring which was on the inside of a high picket fence. The girls spent quite a bit of their time in this enclosure playing and learning to speak the trader's language. He would hold an article, giving the name in English and the girls would name the article in their own tongue. This was a slow procedure, but time did not

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bother this trio of people and soon they were able to use a short vocabulary of names of common words. About this same time, a band of Cheyennes were passing and stopped in to see their old friend the trader and exchange buffalo robes for other merchandise. One of these Cheyenne warriors Black-Kettle spied the two Indian girls in the living quarters back of the store. This war chief made a demand for these two helpless girls putting the trader in another tough spot. He did some quick thinking and made this proposition to the chief. If the girls wanted to go with him of their own free will he would give his consent. This seemed to meet the approval of this hardened war chief so the girls were brought before him and the proposition explained to them. Without a word in reply they dashed back into the living quarters and barred the big heavy door on the inside. Black-Kettle was not so well pleased over the outcome of his desire to come into possession of these girls, and said to the trader, "I come back by, me take em". But on a raiding party in southwest Texas, he ran afoul of a bunch of Comanches that outnumbered him, and he never came back.

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Thus, time went on, Inquiries had been sent out from the trading post, in all directions, with reference to the two Indian girls at Mickey the Trader's. Indians came and went, but none of the Kiowa Tribe. These girls, on seeing other Indians coming in to trade, would immediately hide away in their retreat that they had learned to love.

The older girl was now in her sixteenth year, developed and matured into a beautiful woman. She had learned to be a great help to this white trader, doing almost all the cooking, keeping the house clean and making clothes for herself and sister from tanned deer hides. By this time they had gained a fair knowledge of English words, and the trader could speak in their own tongue. Mickey called the older girl Olethea, and the younger one, Bertha.

Olethéa, in her matured years and in the Indian way, felt the calling of a mate. Not being able to establish her own people or contact any other persons suitable or desirable she talked to her sister of this, and was advised to take her problem to Mickey. So a council was held by the three,

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and the matter was talked over in a business way, in the two languages known to them. So it was decided and agreed to by the three that Mickey, the white trader, was to take the beautiful Indian Olethea for his wife, according to the Indian custom. there being no minister or justices of law in the entire country. This arrangement proved to be very happy for all concerned. In due time, a son was born to this couple, a bright smiling youngster whom Mickey named Basil, meaning, Kingly or Royal.

Time went marching on; Olethea had learned a great deal about the store and was not so shy anymore, being able to help her husband in many ways. In helping in the store, she had made a few acquaintances with stragglng Mexicans and Indians who would stop to trade.

One day a big Indian chief came into the store, and Olethea thought she had seen him before so addressed him in her Kiowa tongue and the stranger in amazement, answered her. After explaining that she was really a Kiowa and how she had come to be here at this place she hurriedly pressed this chief for information concerning her family, especially a

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brother older than she whom she thought a great deal of. His name was Poke-A-Waket, or Hunting Horse and as he was a brave warrior she suspected that he had been killed.

Olethea sent a message to her people and asked her brother to make a trip to where she lived, so she could see him once more but the Kiowa, Eagleheart, whom she had sent this message by, on his return journey fell into the hands of his enemies, the Osages, and was kept prisoner for several years.

In the meanwhile at the trading post, business, as usual, came in rushes from every point of the compass and other times there would be a lull for weeks, when they would have very little trade. At these times the trader would go hunting, killing deer, or antelope for his family. One day he was out hunting and had just knocked down an antelope when the form of a warrior came over the hill toward him. On his approach the Indian warrior addressed the trader in the Kiowa language and said "Are you Ek'-Pop-Py, the husband of a Kiowa woman whom I believe is

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my sister?" The trader told him he was, and that they would go straight home and talk this over. On telling these Indian women who he was, there was much rejoicing over finding each other after so many years. He explained why he did not come sooner, as the message had been delayed that was sent by Eagleheart. The girls told their brother how they had been mistreated by Left-hand and how this white trader, Mickey, seeing their plight come to their rescue, and bought them, giving them a home and caring for them all these years, and how he had later taken Olethea for his wife, according to the Indian custom. This met the hearty approval of their brother, Hunting Horse.

Mickey was very proud of his son Basil, who was quite a lad at this time being in his seventh year. He was a bright boy, with a pleasing personality, and a winsome smile with a dimple in each cheek. Mickey had often wished that he could take his son with him back to St. Louis, his former home, with hopes that some of his people, his mother especially, were still living and the arrival

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of his brother-in-law, Hunting Horse, gave him this opportunity to get away. This trip was talked over for several days between the two women, Hunting Horse, and Mickey and a decision was finally reached whereby Hunting Horse and the two women were to stay and take care of the post, allowing Mickey and Basil to make the trip. All concerned thought that only a few months, at the most, would keep them apart. But the lines of several people were to undergo privations, hardships, and a long separation, of which none could realize or foresee at this time.

Preparations were finally completed for making the long journey overland with an ox-team and wagon, which took months to complete. As there was no such thing as communication by mail at this time, it was just a matter of watchful waiting, for the return of these two loved ones, by the wife, sister and Hunting Horse which they did for more than two years.

At this time, a band of Kiowas was returning from the southwest, where they had been on a raiding party and stopped at the post to see the trader. One in the party was

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Eagleheart who had carried a message from Olethea to her brother; Eagleheart had helped to make a success the raiding party and was returning full handed to his tribe. Pitching camp near the post, he decided they would spend several days with his friend Hunting Horse and the two sisters. During the visit, Eagleheart invited his friend and his sisters to return to the Tribe and to their own people, looking with favor on the beautiful woman, Olethea. Thinking that they would only be gone a short time, Olethea agreed to go still believing in her heart that she would soon be reunited with her son and husband. They packed what blankets and other supplies they would need on the trip on stolen horses that Eagleheart and his band had, and headed for the home of the Kiowas, who were camped on the Arkansas River. When they arrived at the camp there was much rejoicing over these two daughters who had been gone for over a quarter of a century. These two Indian women were very attractive and in the prime of life and Indian men began to look with favor on them at once. Hunting Horse told their people how his two sisters

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had been rescued by a white trader of the plains country and of the marriage of Olethea and this pale-face.

Two very noted warriors, young and perfect bronze statues returned at this time from a very successful raid, bringing in many scalps which was always self-evidence of much bravery, and plenty of horses and mules. To celebrate their success the tribe staged a big feast and dance, where they met the two sisters, Olethea and Bertha.

These two handsome braves were very irresistible and overcoming every objection. to their love making, captivated the hearts of the two sisters. They told Olethea that she had been abandoned by her pale-face husband. To all their pleadings, Hunting Horse kept a deaf ear, as he wanted to keep faith with the man who had befriended his sisters. But secret arrangements were made during the night, and Little Chief and Olethea and Little-bow and Bertha secretly slipped away into the fastness of the night and were many miles away at the break of dawn. They took with them all their personal belongings and the horses and mules belonging to the two warriors. Some time later, it was learned they had made it

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safely to the southern band of Kiowas who were living on the North Canadian River. Once again, Olethea and Bertha were with their own people and their own tribe.

Mickey O'Casey and his son, Basil, after several months on the trail from the trading post to St. Louis arrived safely in the town, where Mickey as a boy had lived. He and his son were welcomed by Mickey's people and the little half-breed was quite a curiosity.

Having spent some time with loved ones, they were planning their return journey, when Mickey was stricken with fever, in a very violent form baffling the medical profession of his day. He lay for months and months, having one relapse after another, as much dead as alive. When the fever left him and he regained his strength sufficiently to make the trip, something like two and a half years had elapsed since he and his son set out for St. Louis. In the meantime, Basil had been going to school, gaining knowledge and growing in stature.

Finally they set out for home equipped this time with

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a new and modern wagon drawn by a pair of big stout, young mules that traveled fast, and were not nearly so long making the return journey. They went by the Kiowa camp on the Arkansas, the home of his wife and her people. -Mickey was acting on a vision that he remembered, while in a fevered state of mind. How well all this proved true, for on his arrival, Hunting Horse greeted him and Basil, bade them more than welcome and proceeded to tell them in minute detail of each word and step taken since their departure, including the unfaithful act of his sister, the trader's wife. This was a great blow to the hardened trader of the plains country. He thanked his brother-in-law for his sincerity of heart and his own faithfulness and cutting his visit short he and his son continued their journey to the trading post. There Mickey spent the remainder of his life in the happiness of his wonderful son, who proved a comfort to him in the remaining years of his life.

After their return to the post, the trader and his son were completely lost from the family of the Kiowa Indians and the wife and mother.

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But to this day when a Kiowa sees Indians of other tribes, they look for a double dimple in their cheeks. If they have this they are ready to claim kin with him, it being a legend that Basil O'Casey had many descendants after him.