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Euhee Burial Customs

## INTERVIEW WITH FANNIE FULSOM

Kellyville, Oklahoma

Rufus George, Field worker

June 21, 1937

Mrs. Fannie Fulsom says in early times the Indians did not bury their people like the younger generation of today do. In those days there weren't any caskets, but here is the way they would bury their people. They would dig a grave so many feet deep and inside of this grave they would dig a smaller grave, just small and long enough for that person's body to lie in. Then they would spread a deer's hide in this grave and they would lay the person's body, being wrapped in a quilt, on the deer hide in the grave. Then they would put all of that person's clothes in the grave with him, and they would put a little of something to eat in there with him, too. After the body was placed in there good and everything in order, the medicine man would be standing at the head of the grave with a piece of chewing tobacco in his hand and he would make a talk to God in regard to this person, and this tobacco. He would then place it in this person's hand. It was always their belief that when an Indian died, his spirit would go where

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the rest of the Indian spirits were and when his spirit got there, the spirits would ask him for tobacco. That is why they would do this. The younger generation of today still carry on that part of the ceremony. After this had been done they would cover the body with home-made shingles and then they would fill the grave with the dirt. After this was completed, a man would stand a little ways off from the foot of the grave with a gun in his hand and then he would shoot over the head of the grave. The reason for shooting over the grave is that they believe that is the appointed hour for the spirit to rise.

After doing this, some one would build a fire near the head of the grave. They would build this fire there to give light to the spirit. They keep this fire burning for four days. The third day after the person's death, they would cook a feast in the afternoon for that person's spirit to eat for the last time before he left. They believed that the spirits do not leave until on the fourth day.

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They would move everything, such as furniture, outside the house, excepting the cook stove and a table in the kitchen. They would pull all of the nails off the

walls in the room where that person died. In this room they would have the feast. They say they pulled the nails because the spirits are afraid of anything that is sharp.

There would be four old ladies appointed to cook the feast. When they had everything cooked, they would spread a table cloth down on the floor in that room where the nails are pulled. They would place all the dishes and spoons and food on this table cloth. They would fix this real nice. And after this was finished, they would go out and shut all of the doors and lock them. Everyone would stay outside of the yard east of the house.

The yard all around the house would be swept off and no one would be allowed to go on the swept ground after sundown.

After the house was locked and everyone on the east side of the house, four men would shoot four guns all at the same time over the house. They would shoot in the west. There would be a lot of people there and everyone would sit up all night and talk and watch the house. They say that if anyone would listen real good,

he could hear the spirits in the house making a noise with the dishes. When morning came the medicine man would open the door and go in and place food on one plate for the person that had died before anyone else eats. Then everyone would go in and eat the feast. And after everyone got through eating, they would wash their hands in a tub of medicine made by the medicine man. After the feast all of the dishes and the house were cleaned up with the medicine made by the medicine man. Then all of the furniture was put back in the house and the feast was over, so everyone went home.