

GRAYSON, ADAM

INTERVIEW

#12103

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Early Use of Animals---Products

An interview of Adam Grayson, age 65,
Ke-cho-ba-da-gee town (tulwa), Pharoah,
Oklahoma

Billie Byrd, Field Worker
Indian-pioneer History
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The animals that roamed in what is now Oklahoma and part of Kansas provided the meat for the feasts of the Kiowas, Cheyennes and the other Indian tribes that inhabited this particular section of the country. These animals that were the favorite meat source for the Indians were also favorites of the white man and uprisings came about because the white man was advancing into the wilder sections of the country, killing and destroying the choicest animals. The Indians did not look with favor upon the white man. Millions of buffaloes were killed as were the wild turkeys, deer and others.

Buffalo hides were useful as well as the hoofs and the small horns. It is known that the Indians were not unskilled in some kind of craft work. Many created beautiful things from their quill works which is an art similar to bead work to the arrangement

of the quills, the tanning of the skins of wild animals which in turn would be made into moccasins and shoes. Basket making and weaving of the grasses and pliable branches of sprouts of certain kinds were a gift of other Indians.

The old Indian women were gifted in the preparation of different kinds of dishes to serve in their every day meals. They would add other

articles that would lend an added flavor that is practically unheard of now nor is it used.

It is not said that only western Indians enjoyed in the feasts of buffalo meat but it is told that the Creeks used the buffalo horns as a flavoring to one of their common table necessities. It is not known how the use and the idea originated but it is thought to have been in use before the Civil War period and perhaps at an earlier time.

The corn to be used for corn bread is prepared by beating the grits in a mortar until it is a meal. The meal is made into the batter and let mature and take on a flavor. The horns of buffalo is washed and on hand--it is placed into the corn

meal batter and baked. The horns are removed from the cooked corn bread and placed away to be used again when baking. In this way the same horn could be used over and over. The cornbread cooked in this way is said to have been the most delicious in taste.

When a great catch had been made on fishing trips, it was a treat for the Indians to eat boiled fish heads that had been flavored with some sort of wild mint.

There was a certain kind of white sweet potato that we don't have now that the Indians usually tried to save. The potatoes were kept out in the hot sun until it had become dry and hard. This was stored away until time to be used. The potatoes, when needed, placed in boiling water until they had become soft had the flavor and seemed to have just been taken from the ground.

Indians were firm believers in the powers of herbs as a medicine. They said, "Those are the herbs prepared in heaven by the creator for our use so that we may live long." That is why so many of the older

Indians lived to be old and wise. That was why they always waited for the time when the hogs would root in the ground as if in search of some choice root. They were said to be searching for medicine provided by the Creator. When the hogs were killed at this rooting time, their meat was always tender and flavored as well as being healthy. Since the ~~hogs of the early times were free and loose to roam~~ anywhere they wanted, it is believed they were always in search of their medicine and that was why the meat was healthy and not diseased and not likely to affect any person eating the meat. This rooting time was at certain times of the year and the Indians always looked forward to the time so they could have fresh meat.