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BOAKE, R. L.

THIRD INTERVIEW. 8391

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Interview with R. L. Boake
 Indian Trader
 Anadarko, Oklahoma.

Chester A. Lamb,
 Interviewer.

August 23, 1937.

EARLY DAY EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF R. L. BOAKE.

My father was a trader in the Cheyenne and Arapaho country. I first came to the Cheyenne country in 1891, and worked for my father. He was in business with a man by the name of Abernathy. At one time I knew every Indian on that reservation, and there are many of the Indians living there now whom I know. At present I know every one of the older Indians on this reservation. I do not know the young children. I have the names of every Indian on this reservation, date of birth and description of the allotment of each.

I first came down into this country in 1893, and worked for D. P. Brown in his trader store. I was twenty-three years of age at that time. I later bought out Mr. Brown's interest in the store. When I first arrived here at Anadarko there were only four stores, F. L. Fred's store Cleveland and Company's, D. P. Brown's store and John Craig's store. A few years later Mr Abernathy came down from the

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Cheyenne country and a partnership was formed between Mr. Abernathy, Boake & Cleveland-- or A.B.C. Store, and with the installing of the telephone our phone number became 123, and it has been our phone number ever since. the founding of the town. Both Mr. Abernathy and Mr. Cleveland are now dead, but the store still goes under that name.

It was in my Trader store that I learned the Indian sign language. I have made it a life study. In the early day when the Indians would come into my store they would all talk in sign language. Most of the signs were to indicate goods that I had in the store. If they made a sign that I could not understand, they would stop and keep making this sign over and over so that the next time I would know it, and these old Indians were excellent teachers. I have also studied sign language in Indian schools. I know an Indian here by the name of John Haddon who can draw these signs as I make them. I also have a collection of pictures of historical value which I would be glad to loan for repro-

ductions. I have a picture book on the building of a Wichita Grass House step by step. This picture was taken at Wichita, Kansas, where I took a group of Wichitas for the purpose of building this house. The ornaments which you see here in my office are not a third of my collection. If I had them all in here I would have to build an extension on my house.

EARLY DAY METHOD OF PAYING INDIANS.

The money paid to the Indians was known as Grazing Money or Grass Money. The money was paid to the Government by the cowmen and divided among the tribes according to the share of each one. When it came time to pay off these Indians, the Chiefs of the various tribes would meet, sit around the table with their interpreters and a Government agent.

The Government agent would call out the amount of Grass Money owing to the tribe and the interpreter would interpret the amount to the meeting. If, for instance it was for the Comanches, the amount would be called out in

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the Comanche language. If the amount called out was correct the Comanche Chief would nod his head, either in approval or disapproval. This procedure would go on until all the different tribes were paid. Then these checks were cashed and the money was given to the Indians in silver.

Most of the time this money was given all in dimes as the Indians did not like dollars, and they did not understand gold money. The money was hauled into the pay-place in wagons, and at one time in paying the Indians, ten thousand dollars was paid in dime pieces. That was the time I believe that the cowmen had given a draft to pay these Indians, and all the money came in at once. At that time the Indians were not paid by check as they are now. Colonel Randlett was the first Indian Agent to pay grass money by checks. The Indian Police at that time were paid by checks, but they were the only Indians to receive money by check, all the rest were paid in silver.

THE CADDO INDIANS

The Caddo Indians always bred the best horses on the reservation. The Caddoes were also great hunters. They would band together and hunt mostly on foot, as they were nearly all fast runners.

I remember one time when a band of Caddoes were going hunting down in the Wichita Mountains. They came into the store to buy the equipment they were going to take with them. Now the Caddoes wore soft soled moccasins and before they started on the hunt they came into the store to buy some extra soles to put on their moccasins. They each bought two pair of stiff soles so if one pair wore out in running down their game they would put on another sole. Their soft sole moccasins would not have lasted long on the rocks in the mountains. The way the Caddoes would do they would run down their game on foot, and when they got the game cornered they would all rush in and make the kill.

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EARLY DAY CATTLEMEN

The early day cattlemen and cowboys wore their guns on the left side with the butt of the gun to the front. In drawing a gun in the early days a cowboy would have to reach across his body to get the gun out of the holster. All of the cowboys did not wear their guns like this, but a majority of them did. Every cowboy carried a money belt which was a part of the belt in which he carried his cartridges and gun. There was a flap at the end of the belt to keep the silver or gold from falling out. It was nearly impossible for the money to fall out after the flap had been buttoned. The cattlemen usually carried gold instead of silver as it was not so heavy, and a larger amount could be carried.

THE FIRST BATH TUB

The first bath tub in this country was owned by a fellow named Jack Stillwell, who lived in the store with

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me. He bought this bath tub and put it in the back room of the store. He bored a hole through the floor so that the water would drain under the house. One night after I had gone to bed I heard him calling me: "Bob! Bob! There is something in the house under the bath tub, come quick and bring the lamp". I brought the lamp down stairs to see what was the matter. He was standing in the room with his gun in his hand. He told me to get the light down closer to the floor so that he could see what was under the tub. I got the light as low as I could, and he fired six shots under the house.

In a few minutes a possum came running out untouched by any of the bullets but the bath tub had six bullet holes in it. He set the tub out in front of the shop and went off and left it. A few minutes later a cowboy came riding in and seeing the tub thought it was "laced there" to feed horses in. So he hitched his horse to one of the posts by the tub and went and got some feed for the horse.

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When he returned he put the feed into Jack's bath tub, and from then on the tub was used for a place for one to feed his horse instead of a place to bathe. So that is the history of the first bath tub in this country.