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Interview with Mrs. Sally Ispou Kingsberry
By Grace W. Smith, Field Worker).
March 2, 1937 at Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Kingsberry was born at Paris, Texas, December 14, 1872. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ispou, moved to what is now Oklahoma one month after her birth. Her husband was George Bradford Kingsberry, Indian, whose father was white and mother was Indian. He was a descendant of Captain Charles Bradford Kingsberry and of Governor Bradford of Massachusetts, whose forefathers came over on the Mayflower. Mr. George Kingsberry died four years ago and is buried in cemetery at Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

McCoy Hill

McCoy Hill is located six miles southeast of Ft. Washita, This is the old burial ground of the Indians, some twelve generations being buried there. Three of the McCoy brothers were killed within ten miles of each other in 1873, and are buried at McCoy Hill. She stated that two white men were buried there but did not know who they were and so the Indians buried them there. These brothers were the uncles of George Bradford Kingsberry.

BALL GAMES

Mrs. Kingsberry said she had lived in Indian Territory or what is now Oklahoma all of her life. She recalls when she was a child seeing the fullblood Indians play ball. The ball game was a great sport with the Indians and they would gather from distant places to take part in these games, sometimes bringing their camping outfits and food supplies and staying for a week or more. The games usually lasted all day. They would line up some twenty on a side facing each other. Their dress for the game consisted of nothing but breech, their bodies bare of shirts or other clothing. The ball was laid on the ground and each had a long stick which looked similiar to hickory sticks with bracket on the end something like a tennis racket, this racket was laced with buckskin. To be off with the game the first one rolled the ball or knocked it off the ground the next one hit it, if they missed the ball one would crack the man on the head. She recalls that sometimes the players would be bloody and scratched from these games. They would bet their shirts or the last thing they had on these games. She recalls that the first game she saw was in 1878 and played on what is the court house lawn now.

WILD INDIANS

Mrs. Kingsberry remembers that, when she was a child living at Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, that a wild Indian appeared at their door. She with the other children were afraid and they hid under the bed. The Indian stood at the door and would point to his mouth and then to his stomach. Of course, the children in their fright did not know what he wanted so the Indian entered the house, went to the kitchen, and got the butcher knife. This scared the children for they really thought he was going to cut them to pieces. They watched him as he walked over to a slab of meat that was hanging up, cut him a piece and then walked out of the house. She remarked today if they had not been so frightened they would have known he was hungry and was asking for something to eat.

WILD INDIAN DANCE

Mrs. Kingsberry remembers hearing her father tell of this incident of the Indian Dance in 1872. The Indians, sometimes numbering two hundred would gather in a secluded place in the woods. They would kill a beef, cut the heart and liver out of it. The liver would be cut into small pieces and dipped in a fluid and each person would be given a piece.

They would eat this raw. The heart would be hung in a tree and then the dance would begin. The first person to touch this heart twice would be ruled the next chief of the tribe.

This tribe of people were wild and the government was doing all possible to do to civilize this tribe and it would be an offense and severe punishment for any white man or outsider to be caught spying on these Indians at their dance.

On one occasion Mrs. Kingsberry's father, Mr. Ispou, and a few friends out of curiosity were hid behind some trees and shrubbery watching the dance when one of the Indians spied a white man looking on. Of course, this excited the Indians and it appeared there would be trouble. The government official got to these onlookers and was going to send them to the penitentiary but Mrs. Kingsberry's father plead his cause, said that he was just watching the Indians out of curiosity and did not mean to molest them. The other man with Mr. Ispou was snatched away and sentenced to twentyfive years in the penitentiary for this offense.

INCIDENTS OF GOVERNOR JACK McCURTAIN

This narrative was told to me by Mrs. Kingsberry and she recalls her father telling of the things that happened while he was working for Governor McCurtain.

Governor McCurtain drove to town and bought him a saddle--gave one hundred dollars for it. He took the saddle home and put it on his wife's new sewing machine, got in the saddle and tore the machine all to pieces trying to ride it.

One day Governor McCurtain went to town and bought him a watch--paid one hundred and fifty dollars for the watch. While riding home, the watch was knocked against the saddle horn and stopped ticking. The Governor stopped his horse and got down to see why the watch stopped ticking; he tore all of the workings out of the watch and could not see anything wrong with it; then he put all the screws and wheels back, took the watch home to his wife, showed her what he bought and explained that he took everything out of its belly but could not find what was wrong with the watch.

AN OLD CAP AND BALL RIFLE

This rifle was presented to Governor Jack McCurtain's grandfather by the President of the United States for valor of service to the United States. This

rifle is seven feet long or higher, than a man's head and is of historical value I am told:

Governor McCurtain and Mrs. Kingsberry's father, Mr. Ispen, went hunting in the mountains to kill deer. The Governor killed a deer with the rifle but in turning a sharp corner fell and bent the barrel of rifle. He thought the rifle was no good and sold it to Mr. Ispen for one dollar. Later Mr. Ispen repaired the rifle and the Governor came to him, offering him one hundred dollars for the rifle.

The last trace that Mrs. Kingsberry has of this rifle is that it was shown at a fair at Gardenville, Texas. She made mention some person interested in historical relics told her she would give her one hundred dollars to trace this rifle. This person is dead now, she tells me.

I interviewed Mrs. Kingsberry on March 2, 1937 and found her a very interesting person to talk to. She is living close to Tishomingo, Oklahoma on highway 22 running a filling station. Her husband George Bradford Kingsberry, died four years ago. Her daughters, Minnie and Lennie Kingsberry died during flu epidemic in 1918. Her son, Robert Kingsberry, is living in Tishomingo now.

I have tried to write the interview as accurately as it was given to me.

Mrs. Kingsberry referred me to other places of interest such as the "Old Lewis Kell" crossing. There is a family cemetery located near there and also a cemetery above Spring Creek near Reagan, Oklahoma. I hope to visit these places soon.