

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

LIENEMAN, PETER T. SEVENTH INTERVIEW 9401

Field Worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck

This report made on (date) November 30, 1937

1. Name Peter T. Lieneman,

2. Post Office Address May, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) _____

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month July Day 15 Year 1876

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 13.

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Linnaeus B. Renck,
Investigator,
November 30, 1937.

Interview with Peter T. Lieneman,
May, Oklahoma.

I was born at old Fort Dodge, Kansas, July 15, 1876. My father was then employed by the United States Government doing carpenter work about the Fort and doing some freighting for the Government. The Summer of 1877 Father took a load of four thousand pounds of potatoes for the Government from Fort Dodge south over the then wild plains country to Fort Elliott, Texas.

In 1880 Father was transferred to Fort Supply, in the Cherokee Strip and about a year later, in 1881, I came to Fort Supply with my mother and sister from Fort Dodge in a stagecoach over the old stage line between Fort Dodge and Fort Supply.

When I came to Supply in '81 there were about five thousand Indians camped on the reservation east of the post, and in the fork of Wolf and Beaver Creeks extended a veritable forest of Indian tepees. Many of these Indians were the northern Cheyennes the Government had brought from the

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northwest and in the course of time they were taken on to Cantonment and Fort Reno under escort of the troops from Fort Supply. Many Indians were about old Fort Supply under surveillance of the military authorities quite continuously till shortly before the post was abandoned in 1895. These Indians were rationed regularly and paid cash annuities by the Government at Fort Supply.

As I recall they were issued beef, on foot, at intervals of ten days. The firm of Lee and Reynolds, then extensive freighters over the west for the United States Government and who transported most of their cargo with ox teams, furnished the beef for the soldiers and the Indians on the Supply Reservation. Millard F. Word, late of this county and Arnett, and an early-day cowman in the country approximating old Fort Supply, also furnished the beef for awhile. The beef cattle were delivered to the Indians on foot--a given number every ten days. I am of the belief that the beef allowance to the Indians was at the rate of a pound and a quarter per capita daily,

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estimated dressed weight. All of the beef cattle issued to the Indians around Fort Supply were supposed first to have been weighed over the Post scales and those cattle that went to the Indians always weighed a plenty.

Without exception the cattle were very wild, usually being longhorned Texas steers. They were let out of a log corral and in a frantic dash for freedom they were pursued by the Indians who were armed with rifles with which they shot the cattle. The Indians always shot a critter down-like through the back, never elsewhere unless by mistake. This manner of shooting them seldom ever killed the animal instantly--usually only paralyzed them and they would, therefore, topple over on the ground alive-but helpless. In this position the Indians, squaws and children included, would pounce upon a fallen critter with knives and tomahawks. They never bled a critter and they never removed the hide first but like a savage beast, they cut, hacked, and slashed through to the internal organs first and devoured them, bloody and raw. The Indians' manner of dressing a beef was to remove the entire upper portion of the carcass first,

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and rare was the instance in which they used the head and the brisket--this residue of the beef critter being left lying on the spot where they slaughtered the animal. Even the smaller children scarcely beyond the infant stage would scamper away to the scene of slaughter and stand by waiting for the first piece of raw intestine to be taken from the beef and given to them. These were striking scenes to me as quite a small boy during the first few years of my life at Fort Supply, and my recollection of them is most vivid. On occasions my father would take me to see the Indians slaughter their cattle the Government issued to them.

Fort Supply was headquarters for the intrepid Amos Chapman who spent many years in the Indian Scout service for the Government during the early history of this section of the west. He was stationed at Fort Supply as Chief Scout when I came there and Supply continued to be Chapman's base of operations until he left the scout service and settled on a ranch on the North Canadian not far from Seiling. Thus

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I was Chapman's neighbor at Fort Supply for quite a number of years and Chapman used to relate many of his earlier experiences with the Indians to our family.

Recorded history has it that some time during the Fall and Winter of '74 and '75 Chapman, with others, was going over the plains from the camp of General Miles on McClellan Creek in the Texas Panhandle to Fort Supply to deliver dispatches. On the plains between the Washita and the South Canadian Rivers the detachment of two scouts and six cavalry troopers were attacked by about a hundred Kiowa and Comanche warriors. The scouts and troopers took to the meager shelter of a buffalo wallow not far distant, and there dug in further with their knives but before reaching this wallow, however, one of the soldiers was shot from his horse and left mortally wounded where he fell. The other scout with Chapman and the six troopers making this perilous ride was the noted Billy Dixon who later located in the Panhandle near where Borger, Texas, was founded many years afterward. According to my version of the incident as I remember hearing Chapman relate it, Billy Dixon was the

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first to volunteer to leave the buffalo wallow to attempt the rescue of the wounded trooper. Chapman countered though with the suggestion that since Dixon was a better rifle shot than he that Dixon should remain with the surviving troopers in the buffalo wallow and try to stand off the attacking warriors while he, Chapman, ventured out to rescue their prostrate comrade some hundred yards distant. Accordingly it was Amos Chapman who performed this merciful and daring errand, and got one foot shot off as he returned to the buffalo wallow with the wounded soldier on his back. History says this wounded soldier's life was saved, but as I remember it, he died there on the plains. Sam Manning of Higgins, Texas, who came to Fort Supply in 1874 and spent many years there in the Government service will corroborate this story. The wounded and maimed Chapman made it on to Fort Supply where he was attended by the Army doctors who barely saved his life, so serious was his condition.

Amos Chapman's wife was a Cheyenne woman whom I became well acquainted with and many of Chapman's Indian kinsmen-

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by-marriage lived on the Supply Reservation for some time. Some of the kinsmen of Chapman's wife I distinctly remember were her father, a younger and unmarried sister and one of her brothers. Her father's name was Stone, Old Chief Stone, as he was known. Her brother who was called Buffalo was a sub-chief of the Cheyennes.

Old Chief Stone took part in the battle of Adobe Walls which occurred the Summer of 1874 at the old Adobe Walls trading post on the South Canadian River just over the Oklahoma boundary a few miles west and Chief Stone said that two of his sons were killed in that battle.

The Cheyenne sub-chief, Buffalo, was a consummate renegade. Alone, or leading small bands of other Indians, Buffalo used to make repeated forays against the ranchers, slaughtering their cattle and committing depredations otherwise. Buffalo's greatest crime against the white man's laws and conscience, however, seemed to have been stealing horses; and bold and daring he was in taking them. Because Buffalo was a kinsman by marriage of Amos Chapman, and Amos was an influential man among the Cheyennes; also

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an influential government employee whom the cowmen "used" and vice versa, Buffalo's outrages were endured more than otherwise might have been the case.

It was during the late '80's that this mischievous Cheyenne was in the vicinity of old Cantonment with other Indians just when the old Umbrella Cow outfit happened through that locality going north with a herd of about eleven hundred head of horses, being trailed up from Texas. Buffalo spied a beautiful stallion in the herd and would have him regardless. He sought to bluff the foreman of the outfit into giving him the horse but, failing; thus to get the animal, proceeded to possess the horse in much the same manner as he had satisfied his fancy for horses in past instances, by riding boldly into the midst of the herd of horses after the stallion, notwithstanding the threat of the foreman to shoot the Indian if he attempted to take the horse. But the wily, defiant Cheyenne proceeded to rope the horse of his eye and work him out of the herd, only to meet the Texas cowpuncher who made good his threat by shooting Buffalo to death on the spot.

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The other Indians became so enraged over this offense that they immediately threatened the white men in charge of the herd of horses with retaliation in kind and proceeded to inform Indians distant from Cantonment of Buffalo's tragic end. The cowboys were greatly outnumbered and took refuge in the bakery at Cantonment, abandoning their herd of horses. There they barricaded themselves and prepared for what they thought was to be a defense of their lives but there was a military telegraph line between Cantonment and Fort Supply those days and a message was rushed over the wires to Supply for troops. I remember well the excitement at Fort Supply and the lightning--like action of the soldiers there in preparing to respond to the S O S call from Cantonment.

At that particular time two troops of the 9th United States Cavalry and some six or seven companies of Infantry were stationed at Fort Supply, plus quite a strong Scout force, composed mostly of Indians. Both troops of Cavalry and all of the Infantry proceeded, forthwith, to Cantonment but the Cavalry troopers were the first to leave, departing

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for Cantonment about 8:00 PM, cheering wildly as they galloped by my father's house as they left the Post.

The 9th Cavalry then was a negro regiment and ^{they} were very splendid and audacious soldiers. The Infantry troops required more time to prepare to depart for Cantonment and left Fort Supply later in the night in army transport wagons drawn by mules--two spans of them hitched to each wagon.

~~I was playing about the Post, that afternoon when~~
the news of trouble down at Cantonment was flashed over the military telegraph line to Fort Supply and clearly remember of having heard the clarion call of the Post bugler when he blew the call "boots and saddles" on his trumpet. I had learned the significance of all the different bugle calls, which was largely true of all other civilians then at Fort Supply. The bugler's call that afternoon alarmed most everyone within hearing about the Post for when the Post bugler sounded "boots and saddles"
~~it meant, in other words, a call to arms, to assemble--for~~
action of some nature.

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It was sixty-five miles to Cantonment by way of an established trail but the cavalry troops arrived before daylight the morning following. Troops were called also from Fort Reno and from still another post, the name of which I can't remember, maybe it was Fort Hill. By sun-up the day following the murder of Buffalo thousands of Indians had gathered around Cantonment threatening untoward action because of their so resenting the killing of one of their kinsmen. However, the amassing of so many troops in such short order and diplomatic parley with the threatening Indians seemingly overawed and pacified them; at least, a bloody clash between the two races was avoided at Cantonment that time over the feeling the shooting of Chapman's brother-in-law engendered and the cowpunchers were safely rescued from their improvised fortress in the Cantonment bakery.

In the meantime, however, many of the Texans' horses disappeared and were never found. Allegedly the besieging Indians made away with those unaccounted for and the Indians were obliged to pay for many of the horses by

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having their fixed value deducted from the cash annuities accruing to the Indians in the future and delivered to the owners of the horses which disappeared while the men in charge of the herd were beleaguered in the Cantonment bakery.

The younger sister of Amos Chapman's wife and of Buffalo, and the daughter of old Chief Stone was grown when I came to know her well and she was one of the best looking Indian women I ever saw. One evening while my father and I were at our cow lot and barn milking we heard the report of two rifle shots away to the east of us in the vicinity of the Indian camp area and suspected it meant something unusual had happened among the Indians.

Later in the evening we learned that a certain Indian buck who had been favoring the unwed daughter of old Chief Stone with his attentions had attempted that evening to steal away with the attractive young squaw with a view of making her his wife. Chief Stone, who opposed the union, discovered the young buck fleeing with his daughter before the abductor got beyond the range of Stone's Winchester

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rifle and shot the dashing buck from his horse.

The very severe winter of '85 and '86 was the hardest winter I ever experienced in this country. Cattle losses were staggering and cattle drifted with the storms from as far north as Nebraska to the locality of Fort Supply that winter, but the streams, the range cattle's only source for water, were frozen solidly for weeks at a time and consequently many cattle died for the lack of water to drink. There were many Indians about Fort Supply that winter and they made a practice of salvaging the carcasses of the cattle that perished within accessible distances from the Fort and thus they supplemented the beef issued to them by the Government.

The Indians were half-starved part of the time because of so much graft and corruption practiced by those charged with providing sufficient food for them.

The reason so many Indians were around Fort Supply quite continuously during most of the time I lived at the post was to keep them from causing trouble other places.