

VALLIERE, FRANK

INTERVIEW

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns

This report made on (date) May 24 1937

1. This legend was secured from (name) Frank Valliere

Address R#2, Baxter Springs, Kansas

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Quapaw

2. Origin and history of legend or story Memory

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 12

Nannis Lee Banns
Interviewer
May 24, 1937

Interview with
Frank Valliere
R#2, Baxter Springs, Kansas

OLD QUAPAW DAYS.

My father, Samuel G. Valliere, of Indian and French descent, was born in Mississippi in 1833. I was born in Cherokee County, Kansas, on Dry Creek, July 25, 1853. Father moved on this side of the river in 1872. He died at the age of ninety-two, from the bite of a spider. I had three own brothers and one sister. I still have a half-sister, Mrs. Rosa Lane, living in Tulsa. When the Quapaws of Mississippi decided to sell out there and locate in the Indian Territory, they made the trip on horseback and in wagons with their babies strapped to boards. The Quapaws at Pine Bluff, Arkansas, did not like their surroundings so they all located in the now north part of Ottawa County and in that strip of southern Kansas originally included in the Cherokee Treaty. This strip is three miles wide and sixteen miles long across the north end of the Quapaw Nation. The North line run-

ning east and west would be where the J. M. Cooper store is in Baxter. My father was interpreter for the Quapaws and sometimes acted for the Osages, as their language is similar.

EARLY DIFFICULTIES

After the Quapaws settled here, it was hard for them to make a living or exist as they were not allowed to sell anything that they might raise or have. I have seen them haul a load of wood to Baxter, and keep it covered with a wagon sheet to keep the agent from finding it out. This was the principal reason that the Quapaws left their reservation and went to live with the friendly Osages. My father was one of the thirty Quapaws to remain in the Quapaw reservation. With most of our people gone, it was natural that this would be coveted by the whites and the cattlemen. While I had only three months schooling at the Osage Mission School seventy miles northwest of here, I have given a large part of my time and have always done the best that I could for the tribe. I spent six months (the winters) of seven years in Washington, D. C., in our interests and trying to do what was thought best for our people.

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This was from 1888 to, and including, the winter of 1893, paying \$30:10 to go and the same amount to come home each time. My fare was paid from tribal funds, but of course I had expenses that I bore myself. Mr. Abrams was with me the greater part of the time but I sent him home to help me as we needed some one at this end. I still have a copy of the Red Book of Treaties, in this it mentions that we were to have a certain number of wagons, guns, implements etc. I lost much when my father's papers burned with our house. We also lost the family Bible and other things, so I do not have anything except what I remember.

PONCAS.

Of course with so many of our tribe gone, it looked like a good place to settle the Poncas. They came here with their agent and expected to stay here. Their chief, Joseph, was white and intelligent. They lived in tents near the timber at Blue Springs, and the last year had a crop of six hundred and forty acres south of the state line on this side of the river. They left in the Fall, and the Quapaws got the crop. I wrote to Wash-

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ington and kept working to get them sent out of our country and I didn't know whether I would be killed for it or not. One day their agent and another man came to my house and told me I had to stop working to get them sent away. I reached up over the door and got my gun and told them to leave and to leave the country and that fall they were moved.

Their method of burying is different. What is now known as the Abrams Hill was their cemetery. They bury their dead sitting in an upright position. The bodies were there on top of the ground and no care was being taken of the place and the bones were being destroyed when Mr. Abrams, who had been adopted into the tribe, asked the council for permission to settle on the hill. This was given and the bones were taken and buried. Abrams asked us to help him make logs twenty feet long for his house. I think it took between seventy-five and one hundred logs. He came here from Fulton, Kansas, and had been a friend to us before he came. Often some of us would go to his house and talk with him.

While the Indians were farming, they ate at what you would call a commissary and no matter where they

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were in the field when the signal sounded to eat, you would see the man or boy stick a stalk in his belt and take a direct line for the eating place. Once they had a dance while here. It was called a Warrior Dance.

There was an oak log pole in the center and to this were fastened tugs at the end of ropes. Then the skin in the back of the men was cut and the tug was run under the skin. If, in the man's tugging he broke the tug, he was then a warrior.

After the Poncas found that they could not secure lands here, the Government, through the agent, moved them on west to their present location. Later, they tried to settle the Nez Perces here also but they were only here from the spring till Fall when they were moved. My next trouble was with the white intruders. They were coming in and staking off the land and settling on our lands. I wrote to Washington and was instrumental in getting the Government to send the soldiers here to move them off. Most of them went when they were told by the soldiers to move, but there was one man who wouldn't leave. He went on staking off the land and ploughing, but the soldiers

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moved him off. The soldiers were here about two years and were quartered on Hunter's Hill. This is just north of Sunnyside School. There was never a fort on the Abrams Hill. It was the burying ground of the Poncas and it is true that it was called Ponca Hill, but for this reason only.

RETURN OF THE QUAPAWS

There was a clause in our treaty that when our lands have been vacated so long they will return to the Government, and this I think was one thing that encouraged the whites to settle among us, and this was the reason that the Poncas and the Nez Percés were brought here. The Quapaws had left here for the Osage country on October 28, 1874, and had been living between Tulsa and Sperry. Three years later the Osages requested that the Quapaws be sent home. Later on, at one time, it looked as if they were going to stay away and we would lose our lands. With Mr. Abrams and some other little help we had a survey of the Quapaw Reservation made and had it platted in sections at our own expense. Then we went to the Osage Country and got two hundred and forty of them to return to the Quapaw

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Reservation and these were settled in various parts of their land. Some of it was on the prairie and part was timber, thus giving to each as near an equal division of land as possible. When we had this, our own allotment made, we took the maps to Washington and finally succeeded in getting the Government to consent to what we had done and to accept it as a permanent allotment.. This was finally completed in 1904 and this is how the Quapaws came to allot themselves.

One little incident I might mention here. One day in 1892 on the street in Washington, two men suddenly appeared before me, and told me that they would give me a million dollars if I would lay down and quit working to save the Quapaw lands. I refused, saying that I was fighting for our homes and they disappeared very abruptly. I hardly think that they meant what they said. They wanted the lands, and I was only an Indian.

I also advised the Osages to leave their \$9,000,000.00 intact and not to divide and spend it. They have wanted to adopt me but I have remained a Quapaw.

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SCHOOLS

In our allotment, we reserved 160 acres for school purposes about a mile east of Quapaw and on this the Sisters started a school in 1874. The Sisters were given the buildings. My wife taught three years at the Mission when we had from seventy-five to one hundred pupils, and I was cook. They were allowed \$1000.00 per year from the tribal funds. There was a false petition circulated, which was supposed to be to get funds to continue school, but it really was to stop it. The School was closed in 1888 and 1889 but then I was able to get it reopened and it continued till 1896 when I received an order from Washington to sell the buildings. At this time Peter Clabber was Chief and he was advised by Abrams and Griffin. Mr. Hartley at Baxter was the auctioneer and we sold everything, from the knives and forks up. The auction lasted several days. Hartley during the sale picked up a straw pillow and punched it up and the buyers, thinking they were feather pillows, bid from .75 to \$1.00 apiece. The buildings were also sold. John Holt bought one, and Ike Bingham bought one.

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There were the schoolhouse, six buildings including the residences, and a blacksmith shop. I stayed on the grounds till the last building was removed and the ground cleared. The land was sold to Apple and Goodner for \$75,000.00..

GAME.

I liked to hunt and have killed the eagle, hawk, buffalo, elk and deer as well as the turkey, prairie chicken, etc. I remember one good time we had at the spring east of Peoria when the Chief was Joe Lane. He called the men together and told them to take guns and get lots of meat. We hunted Friday and brought it in on Saturday. The women took care of it and cooked all night. Then we put big wagon sheets on the ground and all gathered around and ate. Sunday night we had a stomp dance, I was big man because I killed deer and brought it in back of my saddle. I was also able to get the second deer.

DANCES.

We still have stomp dances occasionally. They had one last night. Usually some member of the tribe furnishes the food. In the Ghost Dance, they sing all day and dance all night and the following day kill a calf or hog and have a

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feast and eat the peyote bean. This is killing lots of them, for they eat from three to six of them. They should be chewed very slowly and not so many eaten. These beans are as large as a fig and there is a fuzzy white place in the middle of them. They taste like a bean. In July we have a four day gathering or pow-wow. We have plenty of beef and good things to eat and have five tables. Anyone, but negroes, are allowed to come to the table to eat and if you love the Indian you will eat from all the tables. They have games through the day, such as ball games, cornstalk shooting, etc., and they dance at night. Most of the Quapaws are Catholics, and we have dropped much of our religion of old and have accepted theirs and in this way our feasts have lost much of their meaning. The Indian's creed is, no cursing and be good till you die. We still sprinkle fine tobacco at funerals.

FOODS.

The meats were dried at first, as was the pumpkin and the dry beans. I like ten-day bread. First you boil the corn and then you have a piece of wood with a

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flat end and round end, with this you pound the corn. Then you sift it and pound it again till it is fine. Then with this you mix kidney beans, using the bean hull acid for soda. Then you bake this, and it will be hard, but if you soak it in water it gets soft and can be kept so long that it is called ten-day bread. At first we baked our bread on sticks over the fire, then in ovens and had our first stove in 1869. Bows were from two to six feet long and I think hedge makes the best ones, and I prefer the dogwood for arrows.

HOME LIFE.

I was thirty-five years old when I married, though I had to leave once to keep from being married. One day I went to see my aunt who was visiting us and there was a young lady there who was dressed up and had the part of her hair painted red and my aunt told me that that was the girl that I was to marry. I didn't want to get married then so I went out and got on my horse and went to Baxter and stayed two weeks before I came back. It made the folks angry but I didn't want to get married.

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I married Alice Dardeene in 1888. We had two children, Willie and Martha. My daughter is still living and first married a man named Mason and they have two children, but my son is dead. I traveled six years with him and spent what I had, to cure his illness. My wife died in 1904.