

VALLIERE, VIDA.

SECOND INTERVIEW

#13502

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

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Field worker's name Nannie Lee Burns  
This report made on (date) March 31 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Mrs. Vida Valliere  
Address Quapaw, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) <sup>XXXX</sup> White, <sup>XXXXXX XXXXX</sup> Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe Wife of a Quapaw

2. Origin and history of legend or story These facts were found by her among her husband's papers.

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

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Nannie Lee Burns,  
Investigator,  
March 31, 1938.

An Interview with Mrs. Vida Valliere,  
Quapaw, Oklahoma.

#### The Last Pine Bluff Chief

I would like to give you the following story from the notes that I have recently found among some of my late husband's papers. This will supplement the interview that I gave you on November 3rd under the head of old Quapaw customs. In that I referred to our having lived some months in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

One hundred and forty years ago, the Quapaws owned the territory south of the mouth of the Arkansas River to the "Great Raft" on Red River and north to a point of rocks at Little Rock. They began to lose ground when in 1818 they ceded to the United States all but one million, five hundred thousand acres and this they also ceded in 1824 except for an eighty acre tract long known as the Indian Reserve. After a few years they surrendered this also and moved to the Indian Territory.

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The oldest records available speak of the Quapaws as a peaceful people but they could be warriors when necessary as the following story told by General Creed indicates the Osages held the territory north of the Arkansas River except a small strip from the Arkansas Post to the Mississippi River which was occupied by the Quapaws. There was continual war between the tribes and about one hundred and twenty-five years ago, the Quapaws were continually driving the Osages to their hiding places and becoming angry because of not being able to have a fair fight with the Quapaws, the Osages sent a challenge to the Quapaws stating that they would leave a settlement of their differences to a chosen band of fifty warriors from each tribe who should meet on the Grand Prairie and fight to a finish. The Osages replied that they did not have sufficient ammunition for the fight so the Quapaws came back with the suggestion that each tribe bring all the powder and balls that it had to Major Prudhomme an officer of the United States Army, and have him divide it

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into two equal parts. This offer was accepted and all of the powder and balls of the Osages and Quapaws were brought to him and placed on a blanket in full view of both camps with a delegation from each camp to watch the division. After the division, the battle was fought and the Osages were defeated.

Hecaton was the last full blood Quapaw Chief and he died about 1825 shortly after they reached the Indian Territory, and Saracen who had some French blood became the Chief of the Quapaws. Saracen is described as a magnificent specimen of manhood but his heart grew sick in the Indian Territory and he frequently returned to the settlement from which Pine Bluff sprang. According to the best accounts he died about 1839 and was buried in the old Pine Bluff Cemetery which used to extend from Third to Fourth Avenue between Chestnut and Main Streets. Some fifteen years later some of the bodies were removed to the Bellwood Cemetery and when the grave of Saracen was opened the box contained a large amount of Indian regalia.

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The quapaws were friendly to the whites and Saracen would frequently defend them from the Osages and Chickasaws. It is said on one occasion a band of one of these tribes came to cabin of a trapper who lived about three miles below the present town of Pine Bluff and seizing his two small children disappeared with them. The whites were helpless and afraid and when the news reached Saracen who was keeping track of the marauding bands as the police do in this day, he went to the cabin of the trapper and

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after he had heard the little that could be learned, he knew the band and also the place where they would cross the river. He raised himself to his full height and pointing to the western sun said, "When the sun comes there again, Saracen will bring your children or you will see Saracen no more". Leaving the cabin alone, he entered the forest armed with his trusty rifle, tomahawk and knife. The Osages had reached a point about sixty-five miles distant and were entering their dugouts when Saracen with a war-whoop sprang into their midst snatched up the children and

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disappeared into the cane-brakes with them. The next evening, tired and worn, he entered the trapper's cabin with the children. The above is one of the many instances in which Saracen protected his friends. He was very kind to the Catholics and their missionaries and soon all of the Quapaw tribe became Catholics who in turn have done much for their red-friends. In 1888 a memorial window was placed in St. Joseph's church in Pine Bluff in honor of Saracen.

~~Since that day, many of the Quapaws like their~~  
~~Chief have grown homesick for their old home and many have~~  
~~come each year in their wagons just to see their old~~  
~~homes. They felt sick and they thought that the air of~~  
~~their old homes would revive them, and after some time they~~  
~~have made the weary journey back to their new home.~~