

WER-QUE-WA, ELLA

INTERVIEW

#9399

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Ophelia D. Vestal

This report made on (date) December 14, 1937

1. Name Ella Wer-que-wa

2. Post Office Address Cache, Oklahoma

3. Residence address (or location) R. 7

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month unknown Day near Year 40 years.

5. Place of birth _____

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

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 _____

Ophelia D. Vestal
Investigator
December 14, 1937

Interview with
Ella Wer-que-wa
Cache, Oklahoma

I live southeast of Cache about six miles. This is a very dark world to me, as I am blind, but I have good relatives and a baby girl about two months old.

Years and years ago, my mother told me that there was an Indian camp where Lake Lawtonka is now. We lived there. The only schooling was taught us at home. There were no churches close.

The name of the Wichita Mountains originated from a settlement of Wichita Indians. A great sport among the Indians was to kill buffalo and deer. The buffalo hides were used as covers on beds and also used for trading.

Many times the soldiers have driven our horses away, but the Arapahoes were worse than the soldiers.

Indians used to go to the mountains for burial; then a cemetery was located where the Fort Sill Airport is now located. Then the remains were placed in the little Mission Cemetery north of Lawton.

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Mr. Deyo was a great man, Mr. Gilbert is a good man too. I like to go to Deyo Mission whenever I can. My husband reads the Sunday School lesson to me.

Many years ago the Indians just had one name. The father and mother carried separate names. The children could use either name they preferred. When the Government started to paying the Indians, they were given names such as John, James, Eunice, Ruby and Edith but the Indian could carry either the father's or mother's name. Sometime the name is shortened, as, Tippiconnic, John Tipp.

One time an Indian went down into Texas. He bought himself a gun, Not knowing anything of guns, he accidentally shot his hand. Soon he came home and as the Indians always felt toward Mr. Deyo (our first minister in this country) as our God and our doctor, this Indian man went to Mr. Deyo to dress his hand, staying around the church for a few days until his hand was better. As his hand was being dressed once, Mr. Deyo said, "I think you need a haircut," and he cut the Indian's hair off. The Indian took the haircut joke good-naturedly, but soon let

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his hair grow long, and today it is still worn long.

In the early days here when rations were issued, after schools were established, the Government wouldn't issue any rations if the Indians didn't send their children to school, and they were punished if heard speaking the Indian language. This was to bring them closer to civilization, causing them to forget their Indian ways.