

~~WHITE SHIELD, RUDOLPH.~~ INTERVIEW. 10115 336

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

337

Field worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) February 26. 1938

1. This legend was secured from (name) Rudolph White Shield, age 36.

Address Canton, Oklahoma.

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

If Indian, give tribe Cheyenne

2. Origin and history of legend or story Marriage customs and feats
of bravery.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 6

Augusta H. Custer
Investigator
February 26, 1938

Interview with Rudolph White Shield
Cheyenne Indian, Canton, Oklahoma.

Indian Courtship.

Indian courtships and marriages used to be carried out in two different methods; these are sometimes used today, but most of the young people do as the white people do in regard to marriage, since they have been to school. A young man would see a girl that he wanted for his wife. He would select a male relative of the girl, brother, father or some one of near kin. He would be especially nice to him, giving him gifts and doing nice things for him in anyway he could. In this way the girl would be supposed to be under obligations and marry the young man to satisfy the obligation.

Another way is - The young man has selected a girl that he wants. He takes a sweat bath, and rubs himself with some sweet smelling herbs that he has previously gathered. This perfumes him. He wraps a blanket around himself and stands near her tepee or any other place where she is in the habit of being. She would likely be with her mother or some other relative, as young girls who are of marrying age seldom go

any place alone. As she passes near him he reaches out and grabs hold of her, and wraps her inside his blanket. He holds her in a firm embrace, and they stand there for a long time. If she does not make any objections this may be repeated several times, on different occasions. Then the boy takes the girl to his tepee and keeps her for several days. Then his folks announce that the young couple are to be married. Plans are then made for a big feast. A beef may be killed and gifts are exchanged between both families. During the feast the oldest man or one whom they think a lot of announces the fact that the couple are married.

Indian Boys Swimming

In summer time we boys often go to the river and take a bath. Indian boys strip off to swim. It is a rule that they make dares to the crowd and any one who does not do as the rest do is known as a coward. This makes them brave. And an Indian boy would just as soon be dead as to be thought a coward. We find a deep hole and dive off, fall off backward, swim with one hand, swim backward and any other stunt that we can think of. The others will always try or be known as one who was afraid. We say he has a woman's heart or that

he is weak-hearted. No Indian boy wants that said about him, he can not live it down. It would be told on him everywhere, at home, in school and any place he goes.

One place where we lived the water in the pasture went dry and every day we boys had to take the horses to the river to let them have a drink. When we started out, we would go in the pasture and catch some of the old gentle horses and ride them to the river. While they were drinking we would get off or ride up close to a young unbroken colt and get on him. He, of course, did not like this and would run or buck with us. If he was through drinking he would sometimes start running back to the pasture, and we got a swift ride or were thrown off before we reached the pasture. But we would always try to ride.

Sometimes he would throw us off in the water. We would not have any way to stay on the colt with no rope or strap of any kind.

Riding a Mexican Steer.

A little black old Mexican steer got into our part of the country one time, I do not know how or where he came from, but he was like the ones they use in bull fights. The boys talked about this black steer for many days. No boy wants to dare an-

other if he does not want to take a chance himself. So many remarks were made about this black steer, that he would be hard to ride, he might throw you off and horn you to death. He would be sure to attack with his horns that were short and turned almost straight up. Some thought that he would jump up high and perhaps turn in the air. Others said that he would bawl if anyone got on his back. There had been so much talk about riding this steer and one day when a crowd of boys were there talking I said to a cousin of mine, "Let's ride him". He replied, "Oh, he will hook you; he will kick you when you fall off; he will jump up high and you can't stay on." Well, we arranged that the pasture gate be left open so that he could not run into the wire gate or fence and cut us on the wire, and they were to stand on either side so as to make him leave through the gate if he wanted to leave the pasture. Some boys on horses caught him and while they held him we both got on his back. I was in front and my cousin was holding on to me. I did not have much to hold on to, just clamped my legs on his sides as best I could. That steer did everything they thought he would. When my cousin fell off I went, too. But my cousin was not hurt and he started running away. I had a sprained knee and could not

run. That steer turned as quickly as he could after we fell and as I was still on the ground, he charged me.

I could not do a thing but watch him come. He lowered his head and made a dive at me with his horns as he went over, but his horns were sticking straight up and he did not reach me with them. He did not try any more but ran on and my friends came and carried me away as I could not walk for several weeks, but I rode the black steer.

A Flood on the Cimarron.

When I was eighteen years old, there was a big flood in the Cimarron River. A bunch of us went down to the bank. The water was roaring and swirling, the red muddy water was swift and deep, logs and trees were coming down the stream. We got to talking about swimming to the other side and back. The more we talked the more some wanted to try. Others were ~~more cautious and said there was no use of going in and get-~~ting drowned but others said a strong man could swim and not get drowned. Anyone who did not, had a woman's heart, and some said that if they did not swim they would have to give a Sun Dance. No one wanted to give a Sun Dance, so we stripped

off and plunged in. It was awful. I never thought of danger, I just stayed away from drifting logs and did my best to keep my face out of the water. Everyone of us went in and reached the other bank. We felt more confident after we had reached the other side and decided that ^{the} higher spirits was helping us and protecting us in our efforts to become brave. When our fathers and grandfathers were boys there was more chance to show bravery. Hunting, charging buffalo, riding horses bare back across the unfenced plains, fighting with unfriendly tribes, protecting the women and children of the tribe against foes. But our environment is not the same as our father's and we have to make our own decisions when an opportunity like this arises. Then we decided to swim back. No one thought of discomfort or the dirty water in your ears, eyes and mouth, just had his mind set on his goal the other bank of the river. All reached it in safety. We were all tired and happy having a satisfied feeling that we had done something very difficult and no one who does something like this is ever just the same person as when he entered the stunt. There was no woman's heart among us.