

WILLIAMS, MARTHA SMITH.

INTERVIEW. #7585

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Hazel B. Greene, Interviewer.  
September 21, 1937

Interview with Martha Smith Williams,  
P.O. Box 144, Hugo, Oklahoma. Age 44yrs.  
Father-John Smith  
Mother-Electa Smith.

I am the daughter of John and Electa Smith, full-blood Oneida Indians, who lived and are buried on what used to be an Oneida Indian Reservation, about ten miles north of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The white man has bought and encroached upon that reservation until there is not much room for the Indians any more. I attended a government boarding school for Indian children until I finished the sixth grade, then they were just gathering up Indian children and sending them to other schools and I happened to be one of those gathered up. I was sent to Lawrence, Kansas, where I graduated and took a post graduate course in domestic art and science. Bill Williams and I married when I was twenty-six years old.

Many people wonder why my folks had English names. None of the Oneidas used Indian names, at least I never

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heard any. There were only about a half dozen surnames used in the whole tribe. Among those were, Smith, Hill, Skinadore, Mettoxen, and Doxtater, and Swamps. I can understand how they adopted the name of Swamps as the marshes where there used to be so many cranberries are near where I was reared. The white people have bought up so much of the swamps, drained them, and put them in cultivation, that very few cranberries are raised there now.

They all have good houses up there. They may be constructed of logs but each house is good enough to keep out the weather, and each has a basement. Those basements are always well filled for winter with all sorts of vegetables.

The planting season is a good deal later in Wisconsin than in Oklahoma. Corn and Irish potatoes are not planted until June up there. Vegetables mature so late they do not have a hot summer in which to begin decay. They are promptly put into root cellars and kept

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cool in the summer, and at a cool enough temperature to keep them nicely until all are used up.

We returned to Wisconsin after Bill and I married, and even though my parents could speak no English, and Bill no Oneida, they welcomed him. Father soon learned to speak English and they went fishing and hunting together.

Father and mother are both gone. I have adopted Oklahoma as my home, and am contented.