

CARN, JACKSON, ET AL.

INTERVIEW #7852

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BIOGRAPHY FORM

WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

CARN, JACKSON, et al.

INTERVIEW.

7852

Field Worker's name Pete W. Cole,

This report made on (date) October 19, 1937. 1937

1. Name Jackson Carn of Wardville; Charles Jefferson of _____

2. Post Office Address Farris; Lewis Armstrong of Atoka;

3. Residence address (or location) Moses LeFlore of Lane, Oklahoma.

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

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 _____

Investigator, Pete W. Cole,
October 13, 1937.

Interview with Jackson Carn, et al.

At a gathering of recent date, Jackson Carn of near Wardville, Oklahoma, in Coal County, age 58; Charles Jefferson of near Ferris, Oklahoma, age 64, Lewis Armstrong of near Atoka, age 53, Moses Leflore, age 52, of Lane, Oklahoma, in a conversation as to how they spent their childhood days at a big gathering such as attending at church meetings for instance and the following conversation was enjoyed by all.

We all are aware of the fact that the Choctaw Indians are great church goers and that it does not matter whether they are church members or not, they are going to be present at the gathering if possible. In our young days we usually were tickled to death when time was about due where there was to be a great big Indian Church gathering that we could hardly wait. When the time came for departure to the church we usually rode our best saddle horse, a new saddle if we were able to buy one, spurs on our boots, a

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large ten gallon hat, a big cowboy red silk handkerchief around our neck and wore the best clothes that we had in our possession; and if we had to go through town we would have our hair trimmed, perfumed up on a bottle of Hoyt's cologne and we would feel as though we were members of some royal family when we would arrive at the church.

In those days, the country being an open free range, grasses grew from a knee to waist high all over the country, it was no trouble for one to keep up his teams or horses that they may have ridden to church. In the evening after all of the people had come in wagons, buggies, while others came on foot, they would put bells on their horses or mules, hobble the two fore feet and turn them out on the range. If there was any water for stock close, the owner would not be bothered about their horses until the meeting was over. As long as ^{they} could hear their bell on horses, they did not worry wondering where their horses were.

In the meantime, the young bucks, as they were commonly called, naturally got together for some fun and would sneak away from the church premises, "I can remember that

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as many as fifty boys," says Charles Jefferson, "would gather at some place away from the church in the evening after supper and challenge each other for a wrestle. There was always some one in the crowd who was thought to be stronger than others and he was reserved until the best winner in the free-for-all was selected to challenge the champion.

"While the challenger was being selected, it usually was hard on clothes as they did not prepare any certain place for the fun. It was out in the open and the whole country to wrestle in so that in most cases the clothes would be torn off their back, while the candidate for the championship was being decided. Nevertheless, the show went on until one challenger to meet the champion was selected and the winner was decided before they would break up. Now and then the fate of the challenger would be to his sorrow, because the champion wrestler would defeat him in the match, and then he would not have decent clothes to wear back to the church.

"Very often in the summer time they would go in

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swimming and spend most of their time in the water as they all were good swimmers. Most of their time was spent in running to see who was the fastest runner and in wrestling. They knew of several new holds and tricks, that very often the stronger man would be shouldered to the mat by some lighter man because he would get caught in some trick that the other boy knew that was not known to him."

In branding cattle or horses, certain rules that they had that must be observed in roping and throwing yearlings and young colts. No matter how wild yearlings might be or how dangerous the cattle in the lot might be, if one was to help brand this stock he had to enter the lot without a lariat rope. All yearlings must be caught by hand and thrown by one man. They thrown to the ground, if necessary, there would be two men to help when the hot iron was put on. There was nothing to stop the branding of cattle until all of the work was done. They continued branding until "chow" or dinner was called. The dinner would be served under some shade trees while the boys would not take time to clean up for dinner but would rush out to the table and help themselves to eats regardless of how ~~one~~ would feel in a work like this.

Now and then one would get hurt in an accident, yet they enjoyed the fun. They all enjoyed any kind of sport, and there was hardly anything but what an Indian did his part well. More so especially in his line of sport. He was a good athlete when properly trained, marksman with bows and arrows, quick to learn. He was one of a class of people that were up with the rest of the people in the world, but were not known nor given the full credit that they deserved.

The Indians knew how to take care of themselves, and they did not risk their lives only when necessary and there are few of them invalids, blind, or bedridden from other causes by nature. It has been said that a full blood Choctaw Indian is yet to be seen begging for money on the street for his living.

Note: Pete Cole, the investigator who secured this interview, expresses himself in an Indian manner. No effort is made to improve his English.- Ed.