

COOK, O. N.

INTERVIEW

13654

230

COOK, O. N.

INTERVIEW.

13654

Billie Byrd  
Journalist  
April 20, 1938

Interview of O.N. Cook, age 54  
Okemah, Oklahoma.

### SMALL INDIAN BAND.

Along about 1910, a certain band of North American Indians belonging to the Kaw tribe numbered about two hundred members but along about 1870 up to 1873 when they first settled in Oklahoma they numbered more than that and were a very powerful band. During the roaming period of the Indians, a certain band would run on to another tribe and would pick a fight with them. Whichever side was victorious would adopt the losing tribe into their tribe.

I had been with the Shawnees from 1890 on up until statehood was declared and also stayed among the Kaws which had decreased until only a small band was left. The decreasing of the small bands of Kaws, as it was told, happened when two Shawnee braves and hunters had gone out to hunt. These two Indian hunters failed to return to their camp and the other tribal members organized and went in search of the missing two. These two men were found by their people but they were dead and seemed to have

2

been murdered. Signs near the place where the two hunters were found showed that other Indians had been around the place. The Shawnees started out to search for the mysterious Indians and tracked them down to a settlement of other Indians.

When the Shawnees discovered this settlement of Indians they attacked it and wiped out the whole camp. Some were killed and some were taken captives. There was a very small band of the Kaws (which was the tribe in the settlement attacked by Shawnees) that had been on a hunting trip that survived to carry on the Kaw tribe. When the Kaw hunters and their families returned to their camp, they found none of their people there alive. They found the dead bodies of some of their people while some of the others had been taken away as captives. Since that time, the Kaw has been the smallest band in Oklahoma.

Some of the older Kaws and Shawnees used to tell of the time when they were making their various moves about, they brought many Indian ponies with them into the new country. These ponies had to be driven in a long line and they took up space a mile wide. The young men were appointed as drivers and were on horseback, guarding them and driving them from either side of the long line formed by the ponies. In some places where they were

COOK, O. N.

INTERVIEW.

13654

3

stopped for water, they would drink up the water from the streams and none would be left.

These bands of Indians were satisfied with the new country and were all the time watching to see that no improvements or any sort of change was ever made by any one, especially the white people. They wanted everything to remain as they had first seen it. Even the first fence posts that were placed in the ground by the whites was chopped down by the Indians.

Peter Knight and William Knight, Creeks, were other well-known Indians among the Shawnees since they lived almost on the outer edge of the Creek country. The Shawnees were found living near what is now Paden, Oklahoma, and all along down into the present Shawnee country. While living near Paden they lived along the Hillaba Creek. The two Knight brothers were also well-known among the whites so that they made and entered into a contract with some white men cattle owners and leased them large areas to make into pastures. The whites had stuck posts all around certain places and had placed the barbed wire but had not nailed them to the post. When the Shawnees came along at night, they chopped down the posts, bundled up the wire and dropped it into a deep creek.

Such Indians didn't want anyone to stick up anything unless it had already been there. Their great desire was to keep everything as it had been given over to them.

I was just a small boy, when the Crazy Snake men chased me and another boy. They spied us one time when that bunch was just out wandering around I guess and <sup>took</sup> after the other boy and me. The country side was a mass of tangled bushes and we managed to run from them and hide around from them for a while. It was in a creek bottom and we seemed to have an advantage of them in our hiding. They kept on trying to find us but we were so hid they finally gave up and we thought they all had left and came from our hiding place when that had just been a ruse to get us to come out into the open for just as soon as we did, guards had been left to watch for us. They "hollered" to the others and we were chased again across the creek. They would ride across after us and we would zig-zag back across. This kept up until we had sighted a light from a house. We ran up to it and began to "holler" and scream. The Crazy Snake men left us alone when they saw us at the house and left us. I never did know what they wanted with us.