

MOORES, JOE

INTERVIEW

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BIOGRAPHY FOR
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Augusta H. Custer

This report made on (date) August 18. 1937

1. Name Joe Moores

2. Post Office Address Geary.oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) Five and one-quarter miles
S.W. of Geary

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year 1880

5. Place of birth Caldwell. Kansas

6. Name of Father Nate Moores. Place of birth Kentucky

Other information about father Hardware store in Calmet

7. Name of Mother Theresa Moores Place of birth Illinois

Other information about mother Died when Joe was three
years of age

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 _____.

An Interview with Mr. Joe Moores, Geary, Oklahoma.

By - Augusta H. Custer, Field Worker.

August 18, 1937.

My mother died when I was three years old and I was reared by an aunt.

When I was eleven or twelve years of age I came from Caldwell, Kansas, to El Reno, Oklahoma, in a wagon with my father. An uncle had a farm just south of Calumet, and my father ran the hardware store in town. I helped in the store, went to school and played as much with the Indian boys as I did with the white boys.

I have gone to many Indian dances. The Sun Dance is very important. They have a special teepee for the ceremony which faces the East. There is a half moon made on the floor with grasses and sage. In this tent they eat peyote. This peyote gives them beautiful dreams and also makes them rather wild at times. When we were in Calumet it was shipped into town by the sack full. A Sun Dance will last three days. At the close of the third day some Indian will go on horseback and get on a little rise between the dance and the setting sun and show himself in silhouette against the sun-set.

There is a buffalo head or hide in the tree branches in the dancing teepee and the dancers gaze at this all the

time they are dancing. Bright pieces of calico or ribbons are hung from the top of the teepee, which are supposed to represent wishes made by the tribesmen to the Feast Spirit. These wishes are for the good of the tribe.

Indians used to tan hides and used a scraper to remove the meat from the hide. This scraper was made of bone or elk horn with a piece of steel fastened to the end. This is considered a valuable possession of the great hunter of the family and is handed down from father to son. The number of years this scraper is in the family is represented by the line carved on the handle.

One time I went with my father to see Doughty Lumpmouth. He had a wash tub full of hen eggs. This left quite an impression on my mind, perhaps because I had never seen so many eggs in one pile, and especially in a wash tub. There was no market for eggs and the family just could not eat all they were getting at that time, so the eggs accumulated.

There were many wild grapes in the canyons, and the Indians were quite fond of them, but they could use only

a certain amount. They had no jars to can them, so they used this method of preserving them. They gathered the grapes, picked them carefully from the stem, then rolled them in flour. They kept fresh this way for months. In the winter when they wanted to cook them they shook out all the flour that they could and cooked the grapes and sweetened them. This made a nice pudding, and was a change from meat and dried corn.

From my father's hardware store in Calumet they would buy coffins. For a child they would buy a man's coffin, so that all the child's belongings could be placed in the grave with him. All the toys and clothing, medicine and everything would go in with the child.

If a grown person died and there was no room for his possessions in the coffin, they would be put on the grave. On one woman's grave I saw a large iron pot and beside it her faithful little dog which had been killed by her friends.

I have seen bodies wrapped in canvas and placed in trees, after a while the canvas would become rotten and bones and trinkets would fall to the ground. When

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I was a boy it was quite a pastime for a bunch of boys to go scouting around to find what they could under the trees where a body had been placed.

Indians are very adept at wrapping packages. I have seen them place a canvas on the ground, put dried meat or other things on the canvas and fold in the edges and sides in such a manner that the package resembled a suit case, and could be easily carried.

They are very generous to their friends when they have money. I knew one Indian who sold some land and he came to the store and bought twelve tents for his friends, and blankets and shawls for the women of his family.
