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LIFE AMONG THE OSAGE INDIANS  
YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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Dedicated  
to  
My daughter  
Miss Leuvite Marie Shire  
Stillwater, Oklahoma

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation and thanks to Dr. T. H. Reynolds, who has so willingly assisted in this work.

## PREFACE

The author has made an attempt in this work to trace briefly the life of the Osage Indians from their first known home, Missouri, to their present home, which comprises Osage county, Oklahoma. He has endeavored, not to treat his material chronologically, but merely to give a picture of their early life in contrast to their present life at the hands of the white man. It is the author's wish to show how the wealth of the Osages has had a direct influence upon the white man's attitude toward them.

In preparing this thesis, the author used government publications as well as a number of books which were written by men who have lived among the Osages. In addition, many Osage Indians were interviewed personally in order to get their point of view as well as that of the whites on the events described.

The printed materials used in preparation of this thesis are located in the New Historical Museum of the Osage Agency, Pawhuska, Oklahoma; the Oklahoma Historical Library, State Capitol, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; University of Oklahoma Library, Norman, Oklahoma; the Stillwater Free Public Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma; and the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College Library, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

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CHAPTER I  
OSAGES OF YESTERDAY

The Osages, whose name is a French corruption of "Wa'zha-zhe," their proper name, belong to the great Siouan linguistic family. Their nearest kindred are the Omahas, Poncas, Quapaws, and Kaws. The similarity of their languages enables these tribes to understand each other readily.<sup>1</sup>

The Osages were formerly separated into three distinct tribes--the Chancers, who lived on the Arkansas, the Bar-har-che or Great Osages, and the Eujetta or Little Osages, who dwelt on the Osage River. The terms Great and Little Osages referred only to size of their towns and not at all to their personal corpulence.<sup>2</sup>

Marquette in 1673 was the first known traveler to mention the Osages, who at that time were living on the banks of the Little Osage River, near its confluence with the main Osage River in Vernon county, Missouri.<sup>3</sup> How long prior to that time they had made that particular locality their home, holding it and the surrounding country by their valor while

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<sup>1</sup>George Catlin, North American Indians, III, 45.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Francis La Flesche, "The Osage Tribe," 36 Annual Report of United States Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 37.



they lived upon its natural products is not known. It is certain, however, that for more than a century before the first mention of them they had made this place their fixed abode. They went forth from there on hunting excursions and to this spot they returned when the hunt was over; also, war both great and small started from there. It was there too, that all the various ancient tribal ceremonies were held.<sup>4</sup>

Although the Osages had been known to the French since Father Marquette's expedition into the Southwest in 1673 and although French trappers and traders, no doubt, had made frequent visits to the Osages, the first authorized visit to the Osages was that of Du Tisne in 1719.<sup>5</sup>

Du Tisne, who had brought goods with him to acquaint the Osages with French merchandise, was well received by the Osages, but they did not like the idea of his going on to the Pawnee country. Du Tisne says:

I learned that they did not want me to take my goods that I had brought, so I proposed to them to let me take three guns for myself and three for the interpreter, and if they did not consent to this, I would be very angry. They consented to this, and I went on to the Pawnee country.<sup>6</sup>

The Frenchman reports that at this time the Osage villages consisted of about a hundred cabins and two hundred warriors;

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<sup>4</sup>George Catlin, op. cit., p. 53.

<sup>5</sup>Anna Lewis, "Du Tisne's Expedition into Oklahoma 1719," Chronicles of Oklahoma, 1925, III, 319.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

they stayed in their villages and spent the winters in chasing the buffalo.<sup>7</sup>

Later French and Spanish traders introduced among the Osages woven goods as well as implements of iron. These innovations in time largely changed the extent of native industries and even crept into the ceremonials of the tribe.<sup>8</sup>

One early record of the Osages we have is a silver medal dated 1800 with Thomas Jefferson engraved on one side and two clasped hands on the other over the word, "Friendship," perhaps given to the Indians by the Department of War to remind them of Jefferson's desire.<sup>9</sup>

Captain Pike visited the Osages in 1806 in their villages on the Little Osage River. This year marks the beginning of a gradual process by which they relinquished from time to time to the United States their territorial possessions. The first of these cessions was in 1808, when the Osages agreed to relinquish claims to all lands east of a line running from Fort Clark on the Missouri River due south to the Arkansas River and thence to the Mississippi, and to lands north of the Missouri River. For this land the Osages were to receive \$1500 a year in goods and certain other considerations.<sup>10</sup> Ten years later the Osages ceded a tract of land west of that formerly

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>8</sup>Francis La Flesche, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>9</sup>Philip Dickerson, History of the Osage Nation, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup>Keppler, Indian Laws and Treaties, III, 95.

given up, but there was no further remuneration.<sup>11</sup>

By the treaty of 1825 the Osages gave up all lands in the State of Missouri and the Territory of Arkansas in exchange for a reservation in Kansas and an annuity of \$7,000 for twenty years.<sup>12</sup> Here they lived for almost half a century. Finally in 1872 they surrendered the Kansas reservation for approximately one and one-half million acres lying in the Cherokee Outlet between Cherokee country and the Arkansas River.<sup>13</sup> They continue to live on this reservation.

The Osages were reported by the early travelers to be the tallest race of men in North America, either of red or white skins. There are indeed very few of their men at their full growth who are less than six feet in stature, and many of them are six and a half and some few seven feet. They are well proportioned in their limbs, and good looking, being rather narrow in the shoulders and like most all tall people, a little inclined to stoop, not throwing the chest out and the head and shoulders back quite as much as the Crows and Mandans. Their movements are graceful and quick; in the war and the chase they are equal to any of the tribes about them.<sup>14</sup> As an example of their speed, one young warrior was dispatched

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 201.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 246.

<sup>13</sup>James Shannon Buchanan & Edward Everett Dale, A History of Oklahoma, p. 130.

<sup>14</sup>George Catlin, op. cit., p. 57.

on foot from Colonel Chouteau's with an express to the Creek Agency, a distance of about forty miles; he started at twelve o'clock noon and returned with an answer between nine and ten the same evening. He had performed a journey of nearly eighty miles in less than ten hours.<sup>15</sup>

Washington Irving, in his Tour of the Prairies, describes the Osages as stately fellows, stern and simple in garb and aspect. He says their dress consisted of blankets, leggings, and moccasins; their heads were bare and their hair was cropped close except for a bristling ridge on the top like the crest of a helmet, with a long scalp lock hanging behind. They had fine Roman countenances and broad, deep chests. "The Osages are the finest looking Indians I have seen in the West," he reports. They had not yielded sufficiently as yet to the influence of civilization to lay by their simple Indian garb or to lose the habits of the hunter and the warrior. Their poverty at that time prevented their indulging in much luxury of apparel.<sup>16</sup>

There was a peculiarity in the shape of the heads of these people which was very striking to the eye of a traveler. It was produced by artificial means in infancy. Their children, like those of some other tribes, were until recently carried on boards and slung upon the mothers' backs. The infants were lashed to the boards with their backs upon them, apparently

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<sup>15</sup>Grant Foreman, Advancing the Frontier, p. 119.

<sup>16</sup>Washington Irving, Tour of the Prairies, pp. 12-13.

in a very uncomfortable position. The head of the Osage child was bound down so tightly to the board as to force in the occipital bone and create an unnatural elevation of the top of the head. This custom they practiced because "it pressed out a bold and manly appearance in front."<sup>17</sup> This is probably more imaginary than real.

The Osages, according to Catlin, made many slits in their ears and suspended from them great quantities of wampum and tinsel ornaments. Their necks were generally ornamented also with a profusion of wampum and beads. As they lived in a comparatively warm climate, there was not as much necessity for warm clothing as there was among the more northern tribes, so their shoulders, arms and chests were generally naked but were painted in a great variety of picturesque ways. They wore silver bands on their wrists and often times a profusion of rings on their fingers.<sup>18</sup>

The Osages seemed to attract, because of personal characteristics, the attention of all travelers who came to their region. Nearly all writers mention the fact that they were insolent and very proud, bearing themselves with great dignity at all times. They were courageous, aggressive and vengeful. The literature of that period is full of their bloody deeds and the terror in which they were held by neighboring tribes.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>George Catlin, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>19</sup>John Joseph Mathews, "Notes on the Osage," Wah'kon-tah, p. 350.

In common with most of their brothers of the plains, they were, however, very hospitable, and were inordinately fond of feasts and entertainments. They always fed anyone who came to visit them on the best they had, and they expected to be so treated when they went visiting. They were unusually fond of tobacco, although they raised little of it themselves.<sup>20</sup>

The Osages lived in permanent villages when first visited by the whites. They had as a rule, rectangular houses, built with vertical posts. The center posts were twenty-five feet high, the second row twenty feet high, and the outer row about five feet high, giving the finished home the effect of a gable roof. Poles served as rafters, and over these were brush, bark, and finally a layer of dirt. The houses were frequently sixty feet long by twenty feet wide. The fires were built in the center of the lodge, the number of fires varying with the size of the lodge as well as with the severity of the weather. The smoke escaped through holes in the roof.<sup>21</sup>

Great efforts were made, especially by the Jesuits, to civilize and Christianize these people, but the constructive work of the Jesuits among the Osage Indians took on a more permanent and a lasting character in the spring of 1847 when they built a church and established schools at the place where Father Quikenborne had first acquainted these untutored savages

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 351.

<sup>21</sup>Hiram Martin Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, pp. 672-673.

with the virtues of the Christian religion. For half a century this place was known as Osage Mission.<sup>22</sup> This Mission is located in Neosho county, Kansas.

In charge of the Jesuit work among the Osages during the mid-nineteenth century was the Reverend Father Paul M. Ponziglione. Two characters, the Reverend Father John Schoenmakers and Mother Superior Bridget Hayden, were his helpers in this work. The first was a young Jesuit priest from Holland and the second a nun of the order of the Sisters of Loretto from Kentucky. Father Paul, however, speaking of the Osage Manual Labor School, of which he was in charge, reported to the Secretary of the Interior: "Let none think that the Osage nation at large has been or will soon be civilized on account of the school."<sup>23</sup>

The great reverence in which Father Paul was held by all Indians from his first acquaintance with them and the extent of his reputation as their friend is shown by an incident of the early fifties. He was overtaken by a band of wild Indians near where Ft. Scott now stands. Not knowing him, they held a short council and decided to burn him at the stake. When everything was ready, however, an Indian woman came and gazed on Father Paul's face. She recognized him and turned to his captors with a cry of dismay. She spoke a few quick words,

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<sup>22</sup>Samuel Webster Brewster, "Reverend Father Paul M. Ponziglione," Kansas Historical Collection, 1905-1906, IX, 19-32.

<sup>23</sup>Reverend Father Paul M. Ponziglione, Executive Document, 37 Cong., 2 sess., 1861-1862, I, 656.

and they immediately released him. They had nothing too great to offer him and, in their uncouth way, made every demonstration of friendliness.

Father Paul was loved by the Osages and known in every camp. He was never distrusted or mistreated but was accepted as a guide and adviser. During the Civil War, he and other missionaries had to leave the Osages. Their leaving was not the fault of the Indians but was due to the perfidy of the whites.<sup>24</sup>

Connected with the missionary endeavors of other denominations was a character named Bill Williams. No missionary himself, Williams helped the missionaries get together a "dictionary of about two thousand words" to "translate parts of the Bible and hymns, to gather material useful in conducting services." This material was printed by the United Foreign Missionary Society of New York, from whose records we find that the missionaries were considerably disturbed when they found Indians doing such uncivilized things as eating the entrails of animals they had killed, that in matters of religion the Indians had "no correct idea of one superior God" and were a "people given to idolatry," and that their manners were rude and habits of living far from clean.

Williams sometimes acted as an interpreter for the missionaries in religious services intended for the benefit of the Indians. Once after agreeing to translate a sermon to the red

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<sup>24</sup>W. W. Graves, Life and Letters of Father Ponziglione and Other Early Jesuits at Osage Mission, pp. 10-14.



men, he asked the minister what text he was to preach from. The minister told him, from the book of Jonah. Williams advised the good man against telling these Indians the story of Jonah and the whale, for they would never believe the fish story, but the man insisted on giving the talk as planned. The story was told and translated; then an old chief arose and with solemn declaration said, "We have heard several of the white people talk and lie; we know they will lie, but that is the biggest lie we ever heard." Then wrapping his blanket about him, he stalked toward his teepee. The rest of the Indians left without further word, leaving the preacher and Williams alone.<sup>25</sup>

The missionaries, who were ready to save a soul in any quarter, were so encouraged by the help of Williams in the first days that they prayed "he might be renewed by the Spirit of Grace." It was a hopeless task. Perhaps the reception of the story of Jonah and the whale showed the futility of the missionaries may have hurt his standing with the Indians. At any rate, he began to show an unwillingness to be identified with their work, finally refusing to interpret a discourse.<sup>26</sup>

It must not be thought, however, that the Osages were not a religious people. The Reverend Isaac McCoy, a Baptist Missionary to the Osages in 1840, says:

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<sup>25</sup>Alpheus H. Favour, "With the Osage Indians," Old Bill Williams Mountain Man, pp. 40-47.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

It has been reported that the Osages did not believe in the existence of the Great Spirit. I was astonished that anyone who had ever been two days among them should be so deceived. I have never before seen Indians who gave more undoubted evidence of their belief in God.<sup>27</sup>

They were indeed very religious people, for almost every ceremony of any sort practiced by them was connected with their religion. They associated every incident of their lives so closely with their religion that one of the finest books written about them has as its title Wah'kon-tah, the name for their Supreme Being.<sup>28</sup>

The very organization of the Osage people is founded primarily upon a theological concept. Ancient leaders of their tribe sought to gain a clearer conception of a power greater than men to whom they could appeal for help that they might make their work of organization effective. Their search began under the broad expanse of the heavens. They watched the sun, moon, stars, and groups of stars as they moved in their orbits, traveling vast distances, yet always in a circle, each moving in its own orbit. They noted the gradual shiftings of the path of the sun to the right or to the left and also the changes of the moon and the paths of the single stars and those in clusters. With these changes they noted that life activities were affected.<sup>29</sup> Vital connection between sky and

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<sup>27</sup>Francis La Flesche, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>28</sup>Lenora Rosmond Morris, "The Osage Nation," Oklahoma Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, p. 112.

<sup>29</sup>Francis La Flesche, "Symbolic Man of the Osage Tribe," 36 Annual Report of United States Bureau of American Ethnology, IX, 68-72.

earth seemed to give evidence of continuity of life and this belief actuated their search for a clearer conception of the supernatural, of the life-giving power that animates all plants, animals, and men.<sup>30</sup>

These old men set apart a house which they called the "House of Mystery." They gathered here from time to time, and around the sacred fire they meditated upon what they had seen, and discussed together their observations of the celestial bodies. As they perceived that these bodies influenced the life on the earth they personified them, even deified them as if they were self-existent, supernatural beings exercising powers of their own. But these ancient men were not fully satisfied that this conception was true; therefore, they continued to observe nature, to meditate, and to discuss together these subjects.

At last they were satisfied that there was an all-pervading, animating power, unseen and not understood by men. They were satisfied that this power was the source of life. It abode in sky, moon, and stars, and gave life to man, insects, grasses, and trees. Abiding places were made one and inseparable by this eternal, mysterious presence to which they gave the Wah'kon-teh.<sup>31</sup>

They divided the people into two divisions, one to represent the sky, and the other to represent the earth, the abid-

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

ing places of Wah'kon-tah. The division representing the earth, they called Ho-ga, the Sacred One. They subdivided the Ho-ga division, one part to be for dry land and the other for the water. The subdivision representing the water they called Wa'zha-zhe, the name which the tribe as a whole now bears. They ruled that the families of T-si-zhe, the sky, should take wives for their sons from the daughters of the families of the Ho-ga division, and vice versa. The continuity and unity of life of the tribe were assured, and the two great divisions were thus bound together by a sacred tie.<sup>32</sup>

The old men embodied the thought that the life given by Wah'kon-tah must be protected, so the men must do this. The thought was symbolized by the figure of a man physically perfect and capable of meeting the difficulties and dangers that beset human existence. This man was regarded as having two positions, one indicative of peace and life and the other of war and death. In times of peace this symbolic man was thought of as standing facing the rising sun, the great emblem of life. The place of sky division formed the left side of the man and earth division the right side. When they assembled for war ceremonies, the changed attitude necessitated change in the two positions of the two great divisions. The sky division now camped to the south, the earth division to the north.<sup>33</sup>

The war rite, with its symbolic offering, the old men placed in the keeping of the earth division. The offering

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

to be presented to Wah'kon-tah was the smoking tobacco. The pipe was to symbolize a man conscious of his own limitations and seeking the aid of the All-Powerful. The pipe not only represented man but signified the unity of the warriors in their supplications to Wah'kon-tah for aid. A ritual was always recited; at the end of each line was the refrain: "A bi da, tsi ga," "It has been said, in this house." This refrain refers to the origin of these rites, to the gathering of the old men around the sacred fire within the House of Mystery.<sup>34</sup>

The various parts of the pipe are spoken of as if they were parts of the body of a man. Into each of these parts the representatives of the tribal organization must, as if by their own acts as individuals, not only merge figuratively the corresponding parts of their own bodies, but the divisions of the tribe they represent, all of which are parts of the symbolic man; thus was recognized the vital unity of the people of the tribe and their dependence on Wah'kon-tah.<sup>35</sup>

This was the philosophical background for the Osage tribal organization. The actual government itself was about the same as that of the average Indian tribe. The principal chief of each division was supposed to be an hereditary ruler, but his authority was frequently usurped by a stronger man. In any case, the leader of the people was of necessity a capable man. In addition to the principal chief, there were several

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

sub-chiefs, all of whom were distinguished warriors. All important questions were submitted to the whole tribe and were determined by majority vote.<sup>36</sup>

The Osage constitution in many respects was not unlike that of their white neighbors. The members of the legislative body, fifteen in number, were to be elected biennially by the people, viva voce. The electorate was the male population over eighteen years of age. Executive power was vested in the principal chief, a natural-born citizen and thirty-five years of age. He was aided by an assistant principal chief and a council consisting of three members. Courts were early established and a judicial department, much like that of the United States was the result.

A significant clause carrying out the Osages' deep religious feeling was that, "No person who denies the being of a God or a future state of reward and punishment shall hold any office in the civil department of this nation." Another clause, which if operative today, would put some of our multi-millionaires to shame, states that a treasurer was to receive for his compensation a ten-per cent commission of all money passing through his hands.<sup>37</sup>

The tribe had many ceremonies and traditions. One of these traditions dealt with the naming of children. According to the tradition, four rocks of the colors black, blue, red,

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<sup>36</sup>John Joseph Mathews, op. cit., p. 347.

<sup>37</sup>Morris L. Wardell, "The Osage," In My Oklahome, 1927, I, 18.

and white were discovered. These were to be heated for the sweat bath when the child was named. After the rocks were found, four buffalo bulls were supposed to approach the people. The bulls rolled on the ground and arose in turn. From the left hind leg of the first bull an ear of red corn and a red pumpkin; from that of the second, an ear of spotted corn and a spotted pumpkin; from the leg of the third, an ear of dark corn and a dark pumpkin; and from the leg of the fourth, an ear of white corn and a white pumpkin. The head man of the gens then took a grain of corn of each kind and a slice of each kind of pumpkin and put them into the mouth of the infant.<sup>38</sup>

Much care was formerly used in the education of the children, although to the superficial observer their education might appear to be rather haphazard. The boys and girls were treated alike until they were eight or nine years old, after which the girls were taught the work of women.

Courtship and marriage were important phases of Osage life, necessitating elaborate ceremonies. The boy asked permission of the girl's eldest brother or perhaps her uncle, but rarely her father. If he received a favorable reply, he then sent some ponies, the number depending on his financial status, to the lodge of the girl's father. If the overture were accepted the ponies were kept; if not, they were returned. The bride's family then sent gifts of some sort, a wide variety being permissible, to the groom, after which, the parents

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<sup>38</sup>Reverend J. Owen Dorsey, "Osage Traditions," 6 Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, p. 379.

of the bride took her to the lodge of the groom. The next morning the groom joined the family of the bride and became its head. He had the right to marry in turn all the sisters of his wife, provided two years elapsed between each of the marriages. Today some Osages use the old Indian marriage ceremonial as well as the white man's marriage ceremony. Chastity was practiced to a marked degree by the Indian maidens of yesterday.<sup>39</sup>

Death to these Indians was the passage across the river to a wonderful land in the sky. They did not fear death, nor did they try to delay it. They usually bore their sufferings with such stoicism that death came suddenly, and, to their friends, quite unexpectedly. Interment was made on a high hill, rocks were stacked over the tomb, and a favorite horse was killed over the pile. Food was buried with the body, along with the personal weapons and other trappings of the deceased.<sup>40</sup>

The funeral was the occasion for much ceremony and feasting. The young braves, especially, were apt to continue feasting and dancing until they had worked themselves up to such a pitch of excitement that a scalping party would be inevitable.<sup>41</sup>

It was, in fact, quite customary for the nearest of kin

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<sup>39</sup>Mrs. Grace Wilson, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Osage Indian), Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

<sup>40</sup>John Joseph Mathews, op. cit., p. 297.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.



to the deceased to organize a scalping party, for it was felt that some enemy had to be killed to accompany the departed one on his way to the happy hunting ground. The kinsman chose some noted warrior to lead the war party, and refusals were rare indeed, since this was considered one of the highest honors possible. This temporary chief made all the plans and assembled all the warriors who wanted to go. The number who went was largely dependent upon the popularity of the leader. When the party set out, the leader was not armed but carried a stuffed hawk. Upon reaching the army camp, the chief went to sleep with the bird on his face; the bird served as an augury of the outcome of the coming struggle. Almost always the auspices were favorable.

Prisoners were, of course, frequently taken and were generally well treated. In fact, they were often adopted into the tribe. If the prisoners were abused at all, it was usually the women who did it. Quite often a newly-made widow or a recently bereft parent would alleviate her grief by torturing and ultimately killing a prisoner.<sup>42</sup>

One rather bloody incident is interesting in that it took place in the Osage hills. About three miles southeast of Ralston, Oklahoma, just below the mouth of Gray Horse Creek on the north side of the Arkansas River, there is a high bluff-- in fact, a small mountain. It overlooks a very rich valley. From its summit the Osages watched in wonder the steamboat

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 336.

called the Kansas Miller as it plowed its way up and down the river years ago. The smoke from the locomotives on the Santa Fee railroad twenty-five miles away can be seen plainly from here on a clear day. With this mountain and this valley the incident is connected.

About the year 1825, when the father of Chief Ne-kah-wah-she-tun-kah was a very young man, the Osages had a permanent camp in the western part of the Cherokee nation called the "Camp Under the Bluff." This camp was built in a much more substantial manner than the Indian teepee with which we are familiar. The huts were very long; four or five families frequently lived in one of them. The sides of these huts were made of bark or hewn boards and were so strong that arrows could not penetrate them.

The Indians generally herded their horses at night around the camp but in time of peace frequently left them unguarded. It was on one of these nights that a band of some other tribe of Indians (presumably Comanches, but the tribe is not known for certain, as the Osages merely refer to them as "the enemy") made a raid on the camp.<sup>43</sup>

While some of them shot their arrows at the huts in the camp, others rounded up the stock and departed, leaving nothing but one small mule, which happened to be tied to a tree and was overlooked. By daylight, they were many miles away. Warned by the braying of the mule that the horses were gone,

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<sup>43</sup>Arthur H. Lamb, "The Sage of the Osage," Tragedies of the Osage Hills, pp. 6-9.

the Osages were not slow to prepare for pursuit, for to deprive an Indian in those days of his horse was almost like condemning him to starvation. Buffalo hunting with bows and arrows was slow work without horses.<sup>44</sup>

Although placed at a disadvantage in being on foot against the horsemen, the Osages were undaunted. Before daylight the chief had organized a pursuing party of fifty men, the flower of the tribe. The pursuers took with them nothing but weapons and the bare essentials of clothing. Sunrise found them miles away in hot pursuit. The little mule was ridden by the youngest man in the party and the old chief, Paw-nee-no-pos-he. The mule was in the lead sniffing the ground and braying and following the trail with unerring instinct. All day the pursuit continued without rest or stop until late in the afternoon when the pursuers reached Sycamore Creek. Here under a large post oak tree (the tree is still standing close to where Gray Horse road crosses Sycamore) the pursuers found the remains of a fire, showing that those who built it were not far away. Here the Chief called a halt. Two scouts were sent to locate the enemy while the rest of the warriors rested for a time and then took up the trail more slowly. About sundown the scouts met the main party near a spring. This spring is on the north side of the river and described as Zeo-och-dah-sas spring. The scouts reported that the enemy was camped on the river bank at the mouth of Gray Horse Creek and that the horses

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

were grazing on the flat under the bluff.

The old chief held a council of war at which it was decided to secure the horses during the night and punish the thieves by daylight. The arms were taken from the warriors to prevent them from attacking the enemy on their own hook during the night. Guards were then chosen and set to watch the horses and camp while the rest sought their much needed rest; they had traveled on foot a distance of nearly sixty miles in one day.

When the first light of the morning star appeared in the East, the camp was astir. The men were divided into three parties. One party followed down Gray Horse Creek; another party went to the river below and came up. The third party secured the horses. The two parties detailed to make the attack met just above the mouth of the creek.<sup>45</sup>

The enemy was right on the bank of the river, most of them asleep. It was still dark when the two parties met. The chief wished to wait until daylight, but the warriors would not be held, and, giving a war-whoop, they dashed on to their enemy, who, taken by surprise, grasped such weapons as lay at hand and plunged into the river. Most of them succeeded in crossing it and getting into the brush on Coal Creek. After the first dash was over, the chief counselled his men to desist and give up the pursuit, but daylight had come by this time and one of the younger men crossed the river. Foll-

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

owing a trail of blood, he came upon the body of an enemy warrior and, seeing this, gave the blood curdling cry of victory. When the rest heard this cry nothing could hold them. They crossed the river and scoured the brush on Coal Creek, and while they found some bloody trails, one scalp was all they acquired. The rest of the enemy got away or were washed down the river. The Osages recovered all of their own horses and thirty of the enemy's; they took many arms and plunder. None of them was hurt.<sup>46</sup>

There are two names in the early written history of the Osages which European writers have stressed in nearly all their accounts. The story of Pah-hue-skah (White Hair) was supposed to have been a creation of one of the Chouteau brothers, but since early time there has been a chief or a headman in each Osage generation bearing that name. According to the story, the first Pah-hue-skah, who died in 1808, got his name through an incident during a battle with European soldiers. It was said that the daring youth during the confusion of the battle dashed in and wounded one of the European officers, who was wearing a white wig. When the officer fell, the young man took hold of the wig, drawing his knife. Before he could use his knife, however, the officer struggled, jumped to his feet, and ran away, leaving the young Osage standing with a fluffy white wig grasped tightly in his fingers. So astonished was he that he forgot to shoot at the retreating

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

figure; when he came to his senses, and after considering the manner in which the officer had been wounded and escaped apparently unharmed, the wig became Was-ken (mystery) to him. Thenceforth, the young man fastened the white wig to himself so that no harm could come to him in battle, and he was known as Pah-hue-skah the third came with his people to the last reservation in Oklahoma Territory.<sup>47</sup>

Claremore is the other name which has come down in the history of the white man. The name is likely the result of the Frenchman's attempt to pronounce the name Grah-moh (Arrow Going Home). Grah-moch, unlike Pah-hue-skah, was an hereditary chief. He was often called "the builder of towns," and his name looms in the history of the region claimed by his people. He was said to have had a great intellect, a fascinating personality, and tremendous force as a leader and warrior. His wars with the Cherokees alone would have made him famous. The first Grah-moh died in 1828, the second in 1838, and the third was identified as the leader of a large band in the last reservation.<sup>48</sup>

There are many tribal legends handed down. George A. Dorsey gives us the following:

There was once a village by a hill. The hill was eating up everything--all the buffalo and deer and horses.

Finally there way a boy in the village, who

<sup>47</sup>John Joseph Mathews, op. cit., pp. 355-356.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 348-349.

said, "I will kill that hill." His mother said, "You leave him along, for he eats buffalo and deer, as well as men." But the boy said, "I will kill him anyhow." He got his knife and sharpened it. He went out to the hill, and said to it, "Now eat me; you have eaten lots of men." The hill said, "What! Will a boy like you say that to me! I will eat you, sure enough!" So the hill ate the boy.

As soon as the boy was inside of the hill, he cut the hill's heart, and the hill wondered how such a boy could make him sick; he thought he must be mad. After a while, the hill died.

The boy came out, and said, "I have killed him sure enough." So everything that was inside of the hill came out--buffalo, deer, turkeys--and all went into the woods.

The chief of the village said he must have a council and do something for the boy, in return for what he had done for the people. So they held a council meeting, and they decided to let the boy have the chief's daughter. He invited all the chiefs to come and take dinner with him.<sup>49</sup>

Another story is that of the division of the tribe, a story perpetuated by the fact that the Osages live on their present reservation in three communities:

The Osage people had built their village upon the banks of a large river (perhaps the Mississippi) where they dwelt a long time. The river overflowed, forcing the people to flee in a panic toward a high hill for safety. They took with them only the barest necessities. A large group continued its flight until it reached the summit of the hill where they established temporary camp. From that time this group was spoken of as Pa-ciu-gthi, Dwellers-Upon-the-Hill-top. Another group halted at a forest where they made camp. They were spoken of as Co-dseu-gtha, Dwellers-in-the-Upland-Forest. A third group was caught in a thicket of thorny trees and bushes where they set up temporary dwelling and became known as Wa-xa-ga-u-gthi, Dwellers-in-the-Thorny-Thicket. A fourth group stopped near the foot of the hill and camped; they became known as Iu-dse-ta, the Dwellers-Below. In later times this group united with the Dwellers-in-the

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<sup>49</sup>George A. Dorsey, Traditions of the Osage, p. 42.

Thorny-Thicket and now their identity is practically lost. Today the Dwellers-on-the-Hilltop have their village at Grayhorse; the Dwellers-in-the-Upland-Forest, at Hominy; and the Dwellers-in-the-Thorny-Thicket at Pawhuska.<sup>50</sup>

Traders were allowed to come into the Osage nation only with a license and then were watched most closely. They were looked upon with suspicion. A few years ago an old Osage in conversation stated his opinion of white traders. Unhesitatingly, he remarked with feeling, "They are a whole damned mean lot. I have never known a good one." There were, however, good ones who often served the Indians well.<sup>51</sup>

With the full-blood Osages, farming was a failure, as they looked upon work as degrading, and to plow and hoe were occupations only for poor white men who had to work for a living. They were careful to impress this idea on the minds of their children. They all managed to plant small patches of corn and vegetables, and if their duties as consistent Indians were not too pressing, with the assistance of the stronger and more energetic members of the family (the women) they managed to raise a fair crop, which they dried and otherwise prepared for winter.<sup>52</sup>

The full-blood Osages were naturally averse to the whites educating their children, especially the girls, and if they were placed in school, it was the result of a large amount of

<sup>50</sup>Francis La Flesche, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>51</sup>Morris L. Wardell, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>52</sup>L. J. Miles, "Osage Agency, Indian Territory," Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1885, p. 89.



coaxing or some other incentive. Many of them who talked very nicely about the benefits of an education would remove their children upon the most frivolous excuses.

Believing that to educate their children was the best possible thing that could be done for them, the Indian agent insisted that the Osage council should pass some compulsory law. As a result in 1883, they passed a bill that all children not in school eight months in the year should lose their annuity, thus placing the school age from seven to fourteen years. As a sequel of this law, the school filled up rapidly and maintained a steady attendance. A large number, however, were unwilling to believe that the law would be enforced, and about 70 children lost their annuity at the June payment. The next year, the Indians were notified by the police that schools would open on September 1 and were asked that they bring their children in a day or two prior to that time. Not only did the Indians bring them in themselves, but instructed them to stay and promised to return them at once should any run away!<sup>53</sup>

The Osages became known as "owners of much money" as early as 1800. Tradition says that at that time a group of Spaniards wandering through the Osage territory (now southwest Missouri) discovered silver, mined it, and cached it in a great cave at what is now called Monegaw Springs. When they returned later to claim their treasure, they were attacked by some Indians, and all were killed but one man. On his deathbed, he revealed

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<sup>53</sup>L. J. Miles, op. cit., 1884, p. 82.

the hiding place of the silver. The tribe thus, suddenly became rich and its chief was named Monegaw, "Owner of Much Money."<sup>54</sup>

Later in the century General Custer discovered gold in the Black Hills, which the white man thought valueless and had given to the Osages as a reservation. For awhile the tribe again became owners of much money. However, before the tribe completed moving to their new home in the Black Hills, there came a rush of settlers and gold hunters. As a result of this gold rush, the Savages were again pushed into an apparently skimpy reservation in Indian Territory.<sup>55</sup>

When the Osages were transplanted this time, an early United States marshal said: "When the Indians have finished eating their dogs they'll starve to death and cease to be a future worry to the United States government. The land, however, which was purported to be "poorly adapted for civilizing purposes" proved to be rich in minerals, particularly oil. When the dogs were finished, what happened is a story for the next chapter.

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<sup>54</sup>Anonymous, "Richest Indians," Literary Digest, December 12, 1936, p. 14.

<sup>55</sup>Frank S. Wyatt and George Rainey, The History of Oklahoma, p. 24.

CHAPTER II  
OSAGES OF TODAY<sup>1</sup>

In the past the Indians have been used sometimes to turn the combinations on money vaults of the United States government. Bribed interpreters have occasionally misconstrued the wishes of both parties, the government and the Indians, to treaties which have never been fulfilled. Indian cliques have managed things to the profit of themselves and to the loss of the tribal members. When Bishop H. B. Whipple, "apostle to the Indians" and authority on Indian affairs,<sup>2</sup> vainly pleaded before the administration in 1862 for redress to the Indians for wrongs committed against them, Secretary E. M. Stanton said to a friend:

What does the Bishop want? If he came here to tell us our Indian system is a sink of iniquity, tell him we all know it. Tell him the United States never cures a wrong until the people demand it, and when the hearts of the people are reached the Indians will be saved.

Tardy redress is of course better than none at all. And

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<sup>1</sup>This chapter is based largely upon personal observation and actual contacts, since the author has taught in Osage County for eight years. His wife was a member of a club that had two wealthy Osage women as members. He was in their homes several times and thereby obtained an insight into their nature and life.

<sup>2</sup>The Americans, 1937, XXIX, 256-257.

after about three hundred years of experimentation are today on the way to a better and more wholesome life.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the removal of the Osages into Indian Territory, the oil industry was in its infancy. No one as yet had any conception of the enormous oil pool which underlay a portion of the Osage nation or of the vast sums of money they would gain from it during the early years of the twentieth century. Each member of the tribe had been permitted to designate his homestead, which should remain inalienable and non-taxable until otherwise provided by Congress, but the allotment law of June 28, 1906 fortunately provided that all minerals covered by the lands to be divided and allotted were to be reserved for the tribe as a whole for a period of twenty-five years.<sup>4</sup> This provision has since been extended, and laws have been passed placing the leasing of oil and gas lands in the hands of the tribal council, whose decisions must meet the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>5</sup>

The government also has wisely provided that the Indians get a royalty fee of one-fifth on all oil from 160-acre tracts with a well-average for the month of more than one hundred barrels, and one-sixth on all oil from leases with a well-average running under one hundred barrels. The usual provision

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<sup>3</sup>Kate Pearson Burwell, "A New Era for the Osages," Sturms Oklahoma Magazine, September, 1906, No. 1, III, 7-10.

<sup>4</sup>"34 Statute," Statutes at Large, 1863, XXXIV, 542-543.

<sup>5</sup>The Lease Department, Osage Indian Agency, Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

elsewhere is that the lessor shall receive only one-eighth regardless of the production. In addition it was provided that only one hundred thousand acres a year were to be offered for leasing, and that at auction, with the understanding that development come within a comparatively short time. Because of this, nearly all acreage is proven territory before it is put up for leasing. Consequently the leases have paid better returns to the Indians than they otherwise would have. A number of leases in the Burbank field covering tracts of 160 acres have brought more than a million dollars apiece. The highest price ever brought by a quarter-section of land was \$1,990,000, paid to the Osages by the Midland Company.<sup>6</sup>

The lease sales, usually held several times a year, are unique and picturesque. Nothing like them can be seen elsewhere, and they have drawn spectators from every district of the United States. Held under the famous Million Dollar Elm on the agency ground or in the Constance Theatre, they are a mecca for those who enjoy the unusual. Representatives of the largest oil companies in the world are usually there, armed with reports of their geologists, with blue prints of the areas offered for lease, and with instructions from their superiors or associates as to just what financial limit they may go in bidding for the coveted tracts. Present also, is the man of comparatively small means, hoping to secure an inexpensive lease in wildcat territory that may prove the basis of a for-

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

tune. The members of the tribal council and many other of the well informed and educated Osages are there with their families. The full-blood in his brilliant blanket is among those present, not quite understanding what it is all about, but catching the holiday spirit and enjoying the passing show. There also are the newsmen, representatives of the great metropolitan dailies, intent upon catching and delineating every bit of local color to satisfy the romantic cravings of their readers.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, by the wise management of the tribal council and the Secretary of the Interior, petroleum has brought to the tribe millions of dollars, and as yet the end is not in sight. Had the mineral rights not been reserved to the tribe, they would have been conveyed with the allotted lands, and so a comparative few of the tribe would have attained the wealth of princes and potentates, while the vast majority would have received little or nothing.<sup>8</sup>

It was in 1926 that the tribe won its title as the "richest people in the world." That year the Indians collected \$13,400 on each headright, money which they spent with a lavish hand. Soon afterwards there was a rapid decline in the oil business. By 1932 the same Indians who six years previously had spent more than \$1,000 a month found themselves reduced to an income of less than \$50 a month. The red men walked again as their large automobiles fell to pieces; their fine

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<sup>7</sup>John Kennedy, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (President National Bank of Commerce), Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

homes went unpainted, and there was no money for expensive, gaudy clothes.

For the year ending June 30, 1934, conditions were improved, as the income rose to \$1,041 a headright. The next year the payments totaled \$1,930 a headright. With the return of prosperity the Indians are buying again. They have new cars--not, however, as big as the ones in 1926. The houses are painted and there are new clothes. Just as in the halcyon days, the Indians are free with their money: they don't keep it long.<sup>9</sup> "They've learned one thing, though," a Pawhuska merchant commented. "Now they buy groceries first."

Carl Giles, former Federal Emergency Relief Administrator for Oklahoma, reported in March 31, 1934, that the total income of the Osage Indians from all mineral resources up to that time approximated \$230,000,000. During the low period from 1928 to 1934 the approximate income of the Osage Indians from all sources was, however, only \$9,000,000.

It is a well known fact that when fabulous sums of wealth are thrust upon a class of people it is their tendency to degenerate morally. However, the opinion of the writer, based upon his own personal observations and upon the statements of responsible men of Osage county, is that the Osage Indians, as a class, from the time of the first oil developments to the present date have not so degenerated. They have, of course, many moral defects, but these are attributable largely to other sources than their oil wealth. Furthermore, the extent of

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

moral degeneracy of individuals who have weakened has perhaps been much less than that of thousands of other Americans who have had similar temptations. The fact that the Indians have not degenerated as some might expect is explained at least in part by the following facts:

First, it seems that the Indians have been slow to learn anything of relative values. Although they have usually spent their money freely for useful economic goods and services, they have often paid unreasonable prices for them. For example, in one particular case an Osage Indian paid \$5 for a pair of ordinary hose worth only about a dollar and then purchased for \$25 a pair of shoes worth no more than \$5. The woman would not consider paying less for those articles; hence, she had a much more limited money power than her income would indicate. It may be said, however, that many of the Indians during most recent years have developed a much better knowledge of economic values.<sup>10</sup>

Second, the moral principles and ideals of the Osage tribe as handed down from past generations have usually been good and have continued to exert a great amount of influence over the older Indians especially.

Third, the Christian environment thrown around the Osages has been generally quite wholesome.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, 96 per cent of the Osage Indians of school age were enrolled in schools when the 1930 annual report of the

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<sup>10</sup>Fred Tillman, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Attorney at Law), Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

<sup>11</sup>Waken-Iron, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Osage Indian preacher and singer), Pawhuska, Oklahoma.



Commissioner of Indian Affairs was published.<sup>12</sup> These four things have had a wholesome moral and cultural influence on the Indians.

As a result of the tremendous income from oil and gas properties, the town of Pawhuska has as its main industry the Osage Indians. All the places of business have in stock and on display things that appeal to them. As the Osages represent a changing culture, some stores make an appeal to the older Indians, who spend their money for blankets and Indian dress which they at one time made for themselves, while other shops display the latest things in wearing apparel, table linens, sterling silver, china and glass ware.

It was of course the whites who changed the living standards of this simple people. The whites built houses for them, and the changed living conditions increased their death rate. What the Indians really wanted to do was live outdoors in tents with their pets around them. The Indians did live in the houses, but the expensive knives and forks they bought rusted while they used their fingers.

In many instances the Indians had guardians appointed by the court. Often these guardians got control of practically the entire wealth of their wards and then left the reservation. One type of incident will serve to indicate how this sort of thing was practiced among the Osages. The ward would tell his guardian that he wanted a new automobile. The guardian would

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<sup>12</sup>Ellis, "Osage Agency, Indian Territory," Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1930.

make arrangements with some car salesman to sell the automobile and would direct the Indian to this particular agency. Since the Indian had no idea of comparative values in cars, the salesman would add several hundred dollars to the price and divide this amount with the guardian.

The grocery stores also practiced this same racket to some extent. The guardian would tell his ward to trade with a certain grocer with whom he had an understanding that the price of all commodities sold to the ward should be raised. At the end of the month when the guardian was presented with the bill from the grocery store, he and the grocery man divided profits.<sup>13</sup>

The legal department at the agency has done all it can to abolish the system of guardians and place all the Indians who need guardians on the restricted list. To restrict the income of an Osage is to put him under the guardianship of the Osage Agency. In many instances, however, it was too late to do the Indian very much good. Most of his wealth had been taken from him by unscrupulous men.

There were many Osages who had more than one guardian. Some of them had personal guardians as well as guardians of their estates. In many instances it was very difficult to bring legal action to force the guardians to release their authority over the property of the Osage.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Fred Tillman, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

Oftentimes the whites have resorted to even shadier or more violent means of obtaining the Osages' money. Rough, illiterate men come flattering the Indian girls, who are pretty up to a certain age. There is a short, perfervid romance, and the girls find themselves married to these rough drillers and rig builders or coming home with unwanted babies. The men rob the Indian girls of their oil money and then desert them. The girls can not go back to their tribe; they become outcasts, wanted neither by the whites nor by the Indians.<sup>15</sup>

Oil has been a curse to the tribe even to the extent of wholesale murder. In 1922 there was a series of violent deaths among the wealthiest Osages.<sup>16</sup> The first of these was the death of Anne Brown of Grayhorse. This girl, who everyone knew had wealth in addition to oil money, was found dead in a lonely canyon on Three Mile Creek with bullet holes ranging downward through her head. Her skull is now in the possession of the United States Department of Justice. A feeble attempt was made to solve the mystery; then it was dropped, for she was only an Indian. All would be better off the sooner that the country was rid of them.

A few weeks later, Anna's cousin, Henry Roan Horse was found dead in an automobile with a bullet through his brain; there were no clues. The following week, Charles White Horse,

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<sup>15</sup>Hugh Jones, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Attorney at Law), Hominy, Oklahoma.

<sup>16</sup>Anonymous, "The Osage Murders," Literary Digest, April 3, 1926, pp. 42-44.

another relative of Anna's, was found dead in a pool of blood.

Again, George Bigheart, a strapping, husky Indian, began to feel ill and at last was taken to a hospital in Oklahoma City, protesting that a certain powerful cattleman in the Osage section must not see him. The cattleman insisted that he would see him, and Bigheart, terrified, telephoned for his lawyer. The lawyer came. What happened nobody knows--at least no one will tell--but the next day the Indian died suddenly and mysteriously, frothing at the mouth. A day later the lawyer got on the night train for Pawhuska, but he never arrived there. He put on his night clothes, turned out the light, and got into his berth. That was the last time he was seen alive. The next day, he was found on the railroad right-of-way with a bullet through him. The pistol had been fired on that train, and the body was pushed through a window, although none of the train's occupants had seen or heard, or so they said.

Living in Fairfax, Oklahoma, was a white man by the name W. E. Smith, who had an Indian wife. One night his home suddenly leapt into the air and came down a pile of debris--dynamited. Smith and his wife, who were going to receive oil money, were killed.

After this murder the authorities were aroused to a half-hearted investigation, "to determine why seventeen innocent Indians have gone to their happy hunting ground by methods that would have made 'Sitting Bull' seem like a ministering angel of mercy." An indictment was procured against a wealthy rancher and a farmer, charging them with the murder of Henry Roen Horse

and the dynamiting of Smith's home. One hundred witnesses were called but were afraid to testify. In the meantime, the curse went on. Since Indian oil protection extended to 1946, there was still plenty of money to lure murderers.<sup>17</sup>

Short of murder and other methods already mentioned, devious ways aplenty are used to get the Indians' money. The Osage country is a stamping ground of bad men, bandits, and cardsharps looking for an easy living. Especially have the taxicab drivers and other common carriers made it difficult for those in authority to handle the situation, as they usually know the plans of such persons and assist in every way to carry them through. Partly because of the taxicab drivers, a considerable number of the Indians over the years have become addicted to the drug habit. A well-established trade in narcotics flourishes among them, possibly because they are unoccupied and find that time hangs heavy on their hands. The same is true in the liquor traffic. One man who was the head of a family has been arrested for drunkenness twenty-two times in the past year. He has just returned from a hospital where he had been taken for treatment of delirium tremens.<sup>18</sup>

One man spent two hundred and forty days in jail in 1934 on charges of drunkenness. A few girls, narcotic or liquor addicts, are paroled to a reliable person who is paid by the

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>David Parsons, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Superintendent Works Progress Administration in rehabilitation of Osage Indian letters and records), Osage Indian Agency, Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

agency to look after them and if possible keep them away from both drugs. One young mother who has three small children has turned to the pursuit of narcotics and liquor. In several cases it has become necessary for the authorities to take the young children from mothers who are drug addicts and guardians appointed for them. Several such children have been educated away from these influences and the results are rather satisfying.<sup>19</sup>

A record kept by the agency for the last five years attributed forty-two deaths directly or indirectly to narcotics and intoxicants; of this group thirty-two were men and ten were women. These are the cases kept on file by the agency and are not entirely complete.<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to the simple homes of early tribal history are the present residences of the Osages on the reservation. The residences range in size from one room to fourteen, with an average of seven rooms per family. The greater number of the houses are covered with shingles, but composition, tile, and metal are also among the materials used for roofing.

The homes are often equipped with the finest of fixtures, expensive vases for holding baseball bats, fine rugs, and tapestries. These people, who were formerly used to the most simple kinds of dishes and household furnishings, have also bought the most expensive silverware, which they do not use, as many of the older Indians like to squat around the fires and

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<sup>19</sup>Anonymous, "Black Curse of Osage," Literary Digest, January 23, 1926, p. 42.

<sup>20</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

eat out of bowls that are used to wash vegetables in. There is no lack of furniture in most of the homes, but there is quite evident a lack of pride in housekeeping and the care of things that have been forced upon them by "high pressure" salesmen. They easily part with home furnishings, if they are short of cash, to secure narcotics or liquor. One young lady who was a drug addict went to her mother's home and removed an expensive chandelier while a cab driver waited to take her to dispose of it for drugs. The houses and furnishings are not cared for by the owners but by hired help, whose interests are a good place to stay with plenty to eat and little to do.<sup>21</sup>

An interesting observation is that the Osages seldom cultivate their own land or even use it for their cattle. They rent it to whites who till it or use it for grazing. Since there is no way of irrigating the tillable land, those who make an effort at farming depend upon the rain and the ability of the soil to hold the moisture which falls. Some of the land "lies out" every year because it is too rocky to farm, and grass does not grow on it so that it can be used for grazing. Usually the unused land is covered with black-jack and oak. However, this reservation of well over a million acres of land contains fertile valley land and much grazing upland, but the Indians made little effort to make it produce. It can easily be seen that at the present time the Osages are the richest and, compared to opportunities offered, the least progressive

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

of all the tribes in the United States. They do not need to work, for each man, woman, and child receives an annuity from the government.<sup>22</sup>

The fact that the Indians owe very little money is not the result of their provident management, but of the policy of their agency, which forbids the making of debts. This policy was established because the white men had so many things to sell the Osages upon the payment of the annuities that often the Indians would not have enough left to live on after they had paid their creditors. Many persons who deal with these people have found that the agency has so protected the Osage interests that it is difficult to get their funds. Often unscrupulous persons get around this by taking their pay in groceries or other commodities, which the Indians can always get because they are necessities. Since there are several attorneys and loan sharks on the reservation who make their living in this manner, it has been necessary for the agency to look after the Osages' interests closely so that they will not be out of funds and something to eat a good part of the time.<sup>23</sup>

In regard to the safeguarding of the Indians' funds, Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma recently introduced a bill to restrict Osage property acquired by descent or devise. The bill, which was passed, reads as follows:

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<sup>22</sup>G. B. Grinell, The North American Indians of Today, pp. 107-108.

<sup>23</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.



Be it enacted, etc., That the restrictions now existing or hereafter imposed by law against the lands, funds, or other restricted property belonging to any Indian of the Osage tribe shall, upon the death of any Osage Indian continue to apply to such lands, funds, or other restricted property inherited or received by bequest or devise by any Indian heir or devisee has not received a patent in fee or a certificate of competency or is less than one-half Indian blood.<sup>24</sup>

If the Osages had been placed on the restricted list from the very beginning of their period of unusual income, the entire tribe would have been able to live in comfort. There were many families whose incomes were reduced to the point where it was very difficult for them to have sufficient of the necessities of life. However, the Indians who had wealth left were willing to help the unfortunate ones, so that the Indians without wealth usually lived with some relatives who still had money. In this way they were saved from want and from the necessity of learning to earn their living by their own toil. An uncertain future, however, is facing these Osages, for their income is becoming less all the time.<sup>25</sup>

By a twist of fate, the six hundred restricted members of the tribe who were allowed to collect only \$1,000 a year, while their unrestricted brothers were rolling in wealth, later drew more than the latter. The government drew on the reserve that the restricted Indians, government wards, built up in

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<sup>24</sup>Congressional Record, 75 Cong., 3 sess., April 28, 1938-May 19, 1938, LXXXIII, Part 6, 7051.

<sup>25</sup>Robert Talley, "Osage Oil Wealth Fading," Literary Digest, May 14, 1932, p. 43.

flush years to maintain their annual payments of \$1,000 a year allotted by the government.<sup>26</sup>

Of noticeable interest in a number of homes is the size of the family. One Osage family has nine members, while two have eight and two seven. The large families are partly a result of the fact that each full-blood has his own income and can set up a home if he so desires. Many fine homes, however, have only one person living in them, with a number of white servants and tenant farmers on the place. Some homes have only two people; in most instances these are either elderly couples or young married couples who have no children. That some of the families are small, however, does not mean that the households are necessarily so; many of the families have relatives living with them for a part of the time. In most of the homes there are friends and "hangers-on" present at meal time or at least at the time the payments are made.<sup>27</sup>

Much has been done in an educational way for the nation. The County of Osage has a number of good district grade and high schools and several Catholic schools. However, since the Indians do not lack for funds, it is customary for the children to be boarded away from home in various parts of the South. This practice is a result of the fact that the change from tribal to white culture makes it difficult for the children of the full-bloods to understand the ideas of their parents and still

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Mrs. Frank Murray, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Osage Indian), Hominy, Oklahoma.

accept the new. As this makes for misunderstanding and unhappiness, the children are sent away from home until they have reached an age at which they can take care of themselves.

During the early oil days, when money was plentiful, a number of brick school houses of several rooms were built. Many of these, however, are not needed today because the population is not as great as in the days of active oil drilling and producing. Consolidations of districts are being made where possible so that these almost-abandoned but well-equipped school buildings can be put to greater use.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps the oldest school at Pawhuska is the St. Louis Boarding School, organized for the Osage Indians in 1856. The present superintendent is Father Huffer, who was born in Germany, taught ten years in Belgium, and has been ten years at the Osage school.<sup>29</sup>

Home-making clubs for women are located at all the centers of population, and the Osage Indian women are urged to join so that they may learn to can and preserve foods. The white people in the county feel a responsibility for teaching the Indians home care and gardening because the Osage funds may some day be depleted. The time is coming when the Osages will have to take responsibilities and learn to make their own living. Only one of the numerous womens' clubs has been able to interest any of the full-blood Indians. This is the

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<sup>28</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

<sup>29</sup>Father Huffer, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

one at Hominy, which is composed almost entirely of full-blood women who take an active part in the work. The lack of interest on the part of other of the older women, however, has caused the county demonstration agent to give an increasing amount of her time to the 4-H Club work in the hope of reaching the younger generation of Indians through this source.<sup>30</sup>

The Osage women, who should be interested in this kind of work, are restless and on the go all the time. They do not enjoy staying in the home, but, true to the spirit of former days when they took their families and went on their semi-annual hunts, they still spend a great part of their time on the road. Instead of ponies, they have expensive cars and hired chauffeurs to drive them over the country wherever they desire to go. They constantly travel between the schools where their children are boarded, or between pleasure and health resorts. One handsome, full-blood mother wearing a bright Indian blanket has three sons in boarding school in one state and a daughter in a different state. She was recently just back from a visit to her daughter and was getting money at the agency to make a return trip. It is not unusual for her and others like her to make two or three such trips a month for any or no reason at all.

When these full-bloods are at home, they are frequently to be found at the agency. Some of them spend the entire day sitting around in the corridors wrapped in their blankets,

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<sup>30</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

planning excuses to get more money to go to more places. One member of the tribe, more ambitious than his fellows, moved to Los Angeles and there built a large colonial house in competition with the finest that movie stars owned. He soon discovered he was unable to sleep amid such luxury and moved out to the garage where his home was more on the style he was accustomed to at his old reservation.<sup>31</sup>

Pathetic is the story of wealthy John Stink and his dogs. John Stink was a simple "blanket Indian." Years ago he fell ill of smallpox and steadily grew worse. Medicine men came, took him outside the Indian village, and consigned him to the "Great Spirit." But by some miracle he did not die; however, he could not return to his own people, for to them he was dead. He built himself a tin hut out of oil and gasoline cans and began to gather dogs around him. They were his only companions, and he lived for them with an Indian's passion for animals. Once a week, he made the two-mile walk to town for tobacco. One hot August day when there was a mad-dog scare, the good constable of Pawhuska was determined to kill all the dogs he saw. He spied John Stink and his dogs and was unmoved by John's pleas. John said that he would take the dogs back to the country, but the constable proceeded nobly to do his duty by shooting the dogs one by one. John gathered the last dog, not quite dead, into his arms and started for his little tin cabin; it died on the way. From then on, John hated the white

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<sup>31</sup>Marian E. Gridley, Indians of Today, p. 14.

men. Living in solitude, speaking to one one, he was a lonesome, bitter rich man until his death, September 16, 1938. After his death, there were many claims to his large estate.<sup>32</sup>

The contact with the white man has certainly not been pleasant for the Osages. Any transition period is difficult, and the assimilation of the Indian into American culture has taken place so rapidly that the Indians have not been able to grasp the change. This has made it especially difficult for the growing generation under governmental control. The recreation and pleasures found in the chase and hunt took care of the desire for adventure among the older Osages, but the present management of the nation has not made adequate provision for the recreational needs. A study of the situation at the Osage agency revealed that no concerted effort has been made by the community to care for this need and to help bridge the gap between the white culture and tribal customs.<sup>33</sup> The Osages still hold their tribal dances, full of meaning and beauty. They desire to hold these celebrations secretly among their members with only invited guests, usually from other tribes. Occasionally, however, some young Indian who has learned the modern American jazz dance will break into the ceremonies with his contribution, much to the deep grief and humiliation of the old full-bloods, who see not only recreational but great

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<sup>32</sup>Frank Pahunkah, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Former Chaplain American Legion, Post #97, Pawhuska, Oklahoma; Osage Indian), Foreaker, Oklahoma.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

religious significance in their tribal dances.<sup>34</sup> Waken-Iron Indian preacher, bemoans this loss of religious feeling among his people.

My people are forgetting their moral and religious teachings. We have long been worshippers of the Christ, perhaps the same as the white mans' Christ, but in a different manner. My people have had their heads turned away from the essential things of life by unfavorable associations with the white man. The white man first sent us teachers of the white mans' manner of worshipping the Christ; then came riches, with automobiles and strong drink and attending evils which occupy the time of the Indian and lead him astray. Because of this, my people are not giving the attention to religion that they should.<sup>35</sup>

To combat among the Osages the evils introduced by the whites has been the task of the agency, assisted by the community facilities that might be used. Among the religious organizations are found twenty-three peyote churches that are attended exclusively by about two hundred Indians.<sup>36</sup> The greatest number, however, are members of Catholic churches in the county. The Catholic faith was found among them in their early history and is yet the outstanding one, for about two hundred Osages are on the church roll at Pawhuska,<sup>37</sup> and one hundred and fifty at Fairfax.<sup>38</sup> One minister of a Protestant denomination expressed the belief that when the churches were

<sup>34</sup>Paul McGuire, "Indian Dances Have Various Meanings," Pawhuska (Oklahoma) Journal Capital, June 26, 1940.

<sup>35</sup>Waken-Iron, op. cit.

<sup>36</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

<sup>37</sup>Father DePraiter, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Catholic Church), Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

<sup>38</sup>Father Achdergael, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Catholic Church), Fairfax, Oklahoma.

built during the time of the early oil boom the different denominations had plenty of funds and did not need the financial assistance of the Osage Indians, so that the Indians were left to their own desire as to church affiliation. The fact that the French Catholics intermarried with the Indians and that the Catholics had an earlier influence upon them may help to explain the partial failure of the Protestants among the Osages.

While a large number of the Osages have adopted the Christian religion, a great many of the older Indians still cling to the ideas of the early tribal rites of a religious and supplicatory character. The rites relating to life, war, and peace are held in especial veneration, for the thoughts embodied in the tribal rites were gathered by "holy men" from nature through years of patient toil; and the Osage people learned to depend upon Wah'kon-tah for continued existence. It is small wonder, then, that the tribal rites have not died out in the comparatively short time that Christianity has exerted its influence upon the Osages.<sup>39</sup>

The Osages have been called fire-worshippers, and this is found to be true to a small degree in the religion some of them practice today. The mescal bean was introduced into the Osage rites by a Mr. Moorhead about 1899 or possibly 1900 and has gained a hold in the tribal secret services. An Osage eats the bean with the idea that it will give him strength to forsake evil. It really does this in many case, showing that the eat-

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<sup>39</sup>Lenora Rosmond Morris, "The Osage Nation," Oklahoma Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, p. 119.



ing of the bean cannot be entirely bad, although it does play havoc with the health of a few religious fanatics.<sup>40</sup>

This devotion occurs weekly and is secretly held in a sweat house, from which fresh air is excluded. Some devotees say the service begins on Saturday morning and some, Saturday evening, while others say only Sunday is spent in the devotion. At any rate, there is cut a shallow pit the shape of a coffin in which a fire is kept going by the leaders. Rocks are piled in a circle and heated with wood to a white heat; water is poured over the rocks and the Indians begin the sweating process. The devotees crouch about the fire to watch the flames and Wah-kon-tah is supposed to come to them in beautiful visions. Perspiration oozes from every pore until the persons are sick or faint; they often vomit and then plunge into a stream of water from which they emerge cleansed and made ready for their devotions of the morrow. The gambler and the drunkard who go through this service and eat the bean with the intent to reform do find some impetus for good that helps to keep them straight. The drug may kill the taste for liquor or take the place of it and destroy the influences of other vices. It was the general opinion expressed by a number of the employees at the Pawhuska agency that the Indians who are users of the mescal bean are among the best Indians.<sup>41</sup>

There are many traditions and superstitions which are be-

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

lieved by some of the more ignorant and regarded lightly by others. One instance of their fears and alarms concerning the supernatural is their terror of darkness, especially around the towns where their dead are buried. Many are not yet brave enough to get farther away from the dwelling after dark than the small circle of light surrounding it.<sup>42</sup>

The tribe still has some confused idea of a future life, for example the thought that if they are properly painted when they die, according to the markings peculiar to their family, they will be known by their relatives and joined after death. It is also the custom among some to dress the corpse in his best robes and blankets and make ready for burial. The body is placed in a half reclining position, as if seated in a rocking chair, and is buried like this by placing it on the ground and building a tomb of rough stones around it, so constructed as to resist beasts of prey. Their personal effects are placed in the tomb with the body, and the favorite pony is led to the tomb and shot so that all might pass to the happy hunting ground together.<sup>43</sup>

Such a ceremony is used among the older members of the tribe today, as shown in the following recent newspaper excerpt:

At noon Thursday the spirit of John Abbott was sent speeding on its way toward the sun, ending the career of a great Osage statesman, wit and orator.

Burial was at Hominy, Abbott's home, and was signaled by full Peyote religious ceremonies as well as the customary tribal rites. The funeral was well

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<sup>42</sup>Frank Pahunkah, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup>Lenora Rosmond Morris, op. cit., p. 121.

attended by several hundred persons, a large number of whom were spectators attracted by the knowledge that this would be one of the few remaining big Osage funerals so full of symbolistic beauty.

Ceremonies actually began at sunrise Thursday when Edgar McCarthy, the road chief of the Peyote sect, came and painted the face and hair of the dead man, thus enabling him to be **recognized** by his fellow tribesmen when he reaches the happy hunting grounds.

Mourning tribesmen began congregating at the Abbott home by early morning. Most of them were attired in their brightly hued blankets and carrying tribal feather fans. To them the solemnity of the occasion forbade casual conversation. They recognized each other by curt nods or brief, silent handshakes.

In mid-morning the road chief began an address over the bier. In this address as well as others which followed, the theme was the religious significance of the occasion rather than an eulogy to Abbott.

With the address finished, the road chief stepped to the coffin and waved his eagle feather fan rapidly over the deceased, brushing away the evil spirits. He then touched the forehead of the breast of the deceased and touched his own, giving to the departing spirit the life of his own mind and heart. This was a signal to the mourners to begin a wailing chant as the relatives and friends passed the bier, each repeating the road chief's gestures.

While this was taking place, the road chief went out to the front yard where he stood alone, addressing himself to Wah'kon-tah, the great spirit of the Osages, telling him that the soul of a fellow tribesman would soon be released from earth. Burial which immediately followed this ceremony was again presided over by McCarthy.

In his address here he pointed out to Wah'kon-tah the many fine qualities of the deceased and finished with a supplication that Wah'kon-tah should aid the spirit on its immediate journey. Then, at exactly noon, the road chief in a high, excited voice, declared that the spirit of John Abbott was ready for its flight. McCarthy thrust his upturned palm toward the sun. All the assembled Indians did the same. They bade adieu to the departing soul.

The Peyote law specifies that four days after the burial, a meeting can be held for the deceased. This, a secret ritual, calls for prayer and peyote eating throughout the entire night. The widow and son will

stand behind the sacred fire to receive the eulogies for her husband. His dancing paraphernalia, moccasins, and rhythm gourds will be spread out and given away as remembrances. At the sunrise the attendants will exit from a Peyote church, and from the west door, prepare for a feast, and again call on Wah'kon-teh to look with favor a spirit of a still warrior.<sup>44</sup>

Even as their funerals are unlike those of the whites, so are their marriages to a lesser degree. The Osages often do not make any report of tribal marriages among their number but go on living with more than one wife according to their wishes. Very often the agency will not learn of marriages among them, as they do not change their names but continue to get payments under the same name. The fact of a marriage will come to light when a divorce is secured and the one divorced comes in to get alimony following a court decision.<sup>45</sup>

One Osage had been living with two women for twenty years and continued to do so until they both died. One young man had three living white wives who came to the agency at the time of every payment and secured alimony. White girls have often been brought into the town of Pawhuske by their mothers for the purpose of marrying an Osage Indian to get his allotment, just as numbers of white men have married the Osage women for the same purpose.<sup>46</sup>

Since the Osages have had their agency they have been supplied an agency doctor and a nurse. Recently a clinic has been established in connection with the agency. They do not

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<sup>44</sup>Anonymous, The Daily Oklahoman, July 28, 1939.

<sup>45</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

lack for medical attention, for they have learned to spend their money at Hot Springs, Claremore, and various other resorts where baths are given for treatment. In case of an operation or any major illness, they secure the services of the best physicians in the United States. A very usual plea for more funds is based on the need for treatment at some health resort for rheumatism, alcoholism, or some other real or imaginary complaint.

An effort is being made to combat contagious diseases. Vaccinations and inoculations are made for smallpox, typhoid, diphtheria, rabies, and whooping cough. The agency doctor can be secured at all times to give this type of treatment, and the field nurse does any follow-up work that is necessary.<sup>47</sup>

One of the best known and most colorful characters of the tribe is Chief Fred Lookout, who inherits qualities of leadership from his father. The elder Lookout united the two families of Great and Little Osages into one group shortly after removal to Indian Territory. Fred Lookout, only five years old at the time of removal remembers the long journey on horseback. Although he became a master of riding, overcame the hardships of frontier life, and developed physical and mental strength, his father said he must have more education to be able to cope with the white man. At seventeen he was sent to Carlisle and after that attended a Quaker institute at Salem, Iowa. Handicapped by lack of knowledge of English but keenly

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

observant, he assimilated much of the white men's ways and manner of thinking. He is recognized as a man of dignity, honor, and integrity, probably one of the most kindly men of his tribe.<sup>48</sup>

The Osages have many other outstanding tribesmen. Perhaps the best known is John Joseph Mathews, a graduate of Oxford University and a well-known writer. Another fine intellect is Joe Revellete, graduate of the Harvard Business School. The tribe is represented in the field of art by three prominent painters, Wagoshe; George Vest, who specializes in portraits; and Marion Revard, who does pastels.<sup>49</sup> Interesting also because at the time of her death she was the richest Osage Indian is the late Mary Elkins of Fairfax, holder of ten headrights.<sup>50</sup>

Although with absorption of the Osages by the white Americans goes also the learning of their language, the Osage tongue is not due to be lost by any means, thanks to Lookout and Mathews, who have recorded stories of the Osages in their native language. Today all the younger Osages speak English, but many of the older people do not. Quite a few of the younger full-blood Osages speak both languages, changing from English to their native tongue with ease. When at home they use their own language.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup>Marian E. Gridley, op. cit., p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>David Parsons, op. cit.

<sup>50</sup>D. E. Folley, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Attorney at Law), Fairfax, Oklahoma.

<sup>51</sup>Paul Beartrack, "Reminiscence," Manuscript, (Osage Indian), Fairfax, Oklahoma.

Although the Osages have reason to dislike the whites, there are no Indians who have a greater patriotism than they. They love only the country which the Stars and Stripes represent; there are no hyphenated Americans among them. During the Great War these true sons of America bought two and one-half million dollars worth of Liberty Bonds and Savings Stamps. The tribal council gave for the government's use 5,000 acres of oil land to be used by the navy in helping to win the War. Almost one-third of those eligible for the Great War service entered as volunteers since they were not included in the selective draft.

Their constantly increasing Americanization has resulted more and more in their active participation in civic, state, and national affairs and consequently in their coming more into the public eye. They have very naturally emphasized their tribal characteristics so as to bring the general public to closer understanding of them.<sup>52</sup>

They came into the national limelight March 16, 1937, when Indian braves stomped a native welcome for Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt in the quaint brush arbor at the camp ground east of Pawhuska when she visited them on that day. Seated in the arbor, the "first lady" of the white man's country thrilled at the sight of native dances and peered at tribal regalia. "I've never seen anything like it before," she said. Indians wearing blankets and others in modern dress joined to pay tribute to the wife of their great leader, whose predecessor, Herbert

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<sup>52</sup>Frank Pahunkah, op. cit.

Hoover, once lived in Pawhuska with an Uncle, L. J. Miles, who was in 1872 Superintendent of the Osage Agency.<sup>53</sup>

Crowds to greet Mrs. Roosevelt had gathered all along the highway from Tulsa. Just outside of Barnsdall the caravan of a dozen cars halted to meet the official delegation from Pawhuska. Chief Lookout with his wife and grandson, Eugene Standing Bear, were introduced to Mrs. Roosevelt and rode with her during the rest of the trip. Flanked by two mounted Indian braves, the "first lady" entered Pawhuska in an open car driven by the acting mayor, W. S. Carter. Chief Lookout hulked in the back seat with a gay-colored blanket pulled around his ears to break the chilly wind. Eugene Standing Bull and Paul Pahsetopah, in tall headdress and riding ponies, added to the picture; they accompanied the official car throughout the parade but dismounted to join the dancers at the campground.<sup>54</sup>

On April 30, 1937, fifty tribesmen, all bearing themselves with the dignity characteristic of their race, were honor guests of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce and the American Indian exposition. Led by Chief Lookout, the Osage band appeared at the Chamber of Commerce open forum luncheon, then broadcast a thirty-minute national radio program, following which they recorded forever in sound legends and songs of the Osage tribe. Mathews, the author and a member of the Osage tribal council,

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<sup>53</sup>Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1872, Files of the Osage Indian Agency, Pawhuska, Oklahoma.

<sup>54</sup>Anonymous, Tulsa Daily World, March 16, 1937.



was master of ceremonies at the broadcast put on by KVOO and the National Broadcasting Company. Chief Lookout, Mathews, Freddie Lookout, and tribal singers appeared on the program.<sup>55</sup>

The Pawhuska Journal Capitol contained the following news item last summer:

Oklahoma's Osage Indian dancers are going traveling. They are going to the world's Poultry Congress being held in Cleveland, Ohio, July 28 to August 7, and while there will live in teepees and dance daily for visitors, according to H. G. Ware, extension poultryman, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

Accompanying the group will be Chief Lookout and his wife, and Wakon-Iron, Indian singer. The Indians will be hosts to the governor of Ohio and the mayor of Cleveland at dinner on all States night.

The flavor of early American history will be transported to the ground by the exhibits of curios the Osages are planning to take with them. Some of the articles are very valuable and beautiful, being made of feathers, beads, etc. They are taking four teepees to sleep in and a wigwam.

The Indians are not only going to dance. They are taking with them a live bird exhibit of about a dozen birds which will be principally Rhode Island Reds, although there will probably be two turkeys and some White Rocks and White Leghorns.<sup>56</sup>

Despite their wealth, which is in many ways a handicap, the Osages are slowly progressing to the point of taking their place on a level with the white men in the white men's own civilization.

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<sup>55</sup>Anonymous, Tulsa Daily World, May 1, 1937.

<sup>56</sup>Anonymous, Pawhuska Journal Capital, July 26, 1939.

## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this short concluding chapter is to give a brief review of the principal findings presented in the preceding chapters. The material of preceding chapters will be drawn on for illustrating certain conditions in the changing social life of the Osage.

No effort was made to measure social attitudes. However, a number of persons were interviewed and questioned on several problems, one of them the parent-child relationship. The outward reflection of this relationship is similar to that which is seen between the occidental and oriental. It shows a conflict that is not tangible but present everywhere. The Osage parents, who are not themselves adjusted to contemporary civilization, cannot guide their children into correct social adjustment. Conflict and rebellion on the part of the younger generation are the results. The youth among the Osages are inclined to be ashamed of their parents. They do not understand why theirs are not like the usual white parents of their playmates and school fellows.

The attitude of the Indian parents under pressure from their children is to give them everything they ask for, not to deny them anything. This does not make the situation easier

but more difficult for each one. Many of the parents are greatly disturbed and concerned but are led by their children to ask for funds for this and that reason to gratify their demands. Occasionally when such funds are refused them, they express their gratitude to the agency when out of the hearing of their children. The parents themselves are often like children and need a restraining hand, which officials at their agency have to provide.

The better full-bloods like to see their children get an education and try to interest them in going to school. They are willing to go to great expense to send them away from the environment around the agency. Some of the parents themselves have been unable to resist the evils of liquor and narcotics, and want their children away from them. A result is that the children are left almost exclusively to their own devices as to education and entertainment.

The effect of environment may be seen in one young lady of twenty-three years of age who was interviewed. She was with her full-blood mother who did not speak English. The young woman was eager to talk about her school life in the county public school, where she had been the only Indian in her grade all through the grammar grades. The other children teased her and called her a "black Injun," and this caused her to have many fights. She did not finish high school but married, and has since divorced her husband. After she had gone, it was learned that she and her mother were given to the habit of using narcotics, and she possibly would not have talked had she

not been under the influence of the drug at the time.

Divorce and inconstancy are very evident among the group studied. Although their homes are much above the average as to the number of rooms and furnishings, there is a lack of happy, stable family life; instead there are chaotic wanderings that are indicative of a restless, unsettled life.

The general shiftlessness and lack of responsibility is indicated by the facts that so far as it was possible to learn, no full-blood has ever held an elective office in the county or city, nor is any business in the county owned and operated by a full-blood. The Osages do, however, take part in many events of state or national significance, and they are exceedingly patriotic.

One hundred and ninety-seven Osages were known sometime ago to be infected with venereal diseases. Of this group, one hundred and eighteen were males and seventy-nine were females. Nineteen per cent of those who had been to county physicians for any type of treatment had venereal infection. The disease is, however, even more prevalent among the tribe than the figures indicate, for many of them go to other places for treatment, and still others are untreated. Other types of diseases that were prevalent during past years were measles, scabbies, chickenpox, pink eye, impetigo, trench mouth, and tuberculosis.

Much remains to be done before the Osages are adjusted to contemporary culture. Their unstable or uncertain economic future, due to the fact that their oil wells cannot last a great while longer, makes their course an uncertain one, so that it is imperative that this adjustment be brought about as rapidly as possible.

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