

Nancy Raven

Nancy Raven (also **Nancy Taylor**) (December 25, 1872 – March 25, 1957)^[1] was a **Natchez** storyteller of **Braggs, Oklahoma** and one of the last two native speakers of the **Natchez language**.^[2]

Her father was **Cherokee** and her mother Natchez, and she learned Natchez at home. She never learned English, but was trilingual in Natchez, **Cherokee** and **Creek**.^[3]

In 1907 she worked a little with anthropologist **John R. Swanton** who collected information about Natchez religion, and in the 1930s she worked extensively with linguist **Mary Haas** who collected grammatical information and texts using an interpreter. Among the stories she told Mary Haas was one called “The Woman Who was a Fox”.^[3] Sometimes she used the surname Taylor, which she had taken from her second husband.^[3]

She married four times; she had one son Adam Levi from her first marriage, with her second husband Will Taylor she received land allotments from the **Dawes Commission** in 1907. She was soon widowed, then married a man named Waters, and by 1920 was again widowed and married Albert Raven about whom little is known. In the 1930s she appears to have been once again widowed. In 1930 she sold her land allotment.^[3] She was the biological cousin of the other last speaker of Natchez, **Watt Sam**, who in Natchez kinship terminology was her classificatory nephew.^{[4][5]} Among the Natchez, the language was generally passed down matrilineally, but at her death Nancy Raven had no surviving children, her only son Adam Levi having died from **tuberculosis** at age 20 in 1915.^[2]

1 References

- [1] “Nancy Raven”. Findagrave.com. Retrieved 2013-10-14.
- [2] Kimball, Geoffry (2005). “Natchez”. In Janine Scanarelli and Heather Kay Hardy. *Native Languages of the Southeastern United States*. University of Nebraska Press. pp. 385–453. ISBN 978-0803242357.
- [3] Kimball, G. (2013). “The Woman Who Was a Fox: The Structure of a Natchez Oral Narrative”. *International Journal of American Linguistics* **79** (3): 421–437. doi:10.1086/670925. JSTOR 670925.
- [4] Galloway, Patricia Kay; Jason Baird Jackson (2004), “Natchez and Neighboring Groups”, in Raymond D. Fogelson (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 14: Southeast*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution,

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- [5] Martin, Jack B. (2004), “Languages”, in Raymond D. Fogelson (ed.), *Handbook of North American Indians, Vol. 14: Southeast*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, pp. 68–86 [unified volume Bibliography, pp. 772–999]

2 External links

- **Index of Mary Haas’ notes from her work with Nancy Raven**

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