

He tells of hearing his folks talk about moving from Kansas into Indian Territory. They traveled in wagons and by horseback. The going was slow and sometimes thru country where white people bitterly resented them. They could make 15 or 20 miles a day, then camp and rest up for a day or two.

Fred attended Haskell Institute at Lawrence, Kansas, and first saw the land of his forefathers. That was in the time of World War I, and he had come home for a visit in 1917, and his father told him he did not have to go back to school as he would be called for military service. But he was turned down in the draft, and never went back to Kansas.

In the early days of the Delawares settling themselves in this area, they had a central meeting place on Caney River they called "The Big House". This place served for their ceremonies, meetings, gatherings, funerals, and religious services.

Peculiar to the Delaware ceremonial and rituals was the number twelve. This number figured in all of their sacred rites. Sometimes these rites were referred to in their language as "So-cee". At funerals there was the twelve prayer sticks, and then on the twelfth day after a death the feast was held. In the Big House was the twelve poles, five on each side of the center area and two poles in the center. Each pole had a symbolic and decorated mask attached to the top. During the twelve days following the death of a Delaware, a separate ritual was observed each of the twelve nights. These activities would involve preaching, singing, or some form of memorial for the deceased. To preserve this ancient Delaware burial ceremony, Jack Longbone, a Delaware, had told and had Harold Farrar record this part of Indian life, and in turn is herewith repeated.

"The ceremony is called "putting away" the deceased. Immediately after the time of death the family selects two women to take charge of the many details concerning the arrangement of the food, preparing the body for burial (in the case of a female dead person), and other things normally associated with a woman's type of work. Two men are selected to serve in the same capacity as the women where a male member of the tribe has died. These men prepare the body for burial. These two men are in charge of digging the grave. These selected persons may, or may not, be related to the deceased. The casket is made by the men of the tribe. A meal is prepared and served to the family by friends the night before the burial. Then the body is placed in the casket, after it is bathed and dressed, and the casket is placed in the main room of the home of the deceased, or the home of a close friend or relative. The body always is positioned so the head is at the east. A preacher is selected by the family to conduct the last rites. This person need not be an ordained minister and may be of either sex. The everyday clothing of the deceased is wrapped up in a bundle and placed under the casket on the floor. This bundle contains only one outfit of clothing. The casket remains open and at midnight the preacher burns cedar needles in a small pan which cleanses the mind and eases the suffering of both the dead and living. He prays at this time, both for the departed soul and those surviving. The cedar smoke also drives off evil spirits. Immediately after the midnight ceremony the preacher places a large black handkerchief over the face of the deceased. Then all present partake of a hot drink and light meal. All depart except the preacher and one or two who sit up all night with the body. Very early the next morning the workers return, they eat breakfast, and the grave digging crew is given instructions. While the grave is being dug, some of the other men prepare the "stick" to mark the grave.