

EARLY HISTORY OF THE MIAMI TRIBE

My name is Forest D. Olds. I am chief of the Miami tribe. My Indian name is Metekyah, M-E-T-E-K-Y-A-H. I was born March the fifth, 1911, on the old Miami reservation in Ottawa County, Oklahoma. Going back some three hundred years now, because the year of 1968 was the three hundredth anniversary of the French discovering the Miami tribe up around the west side of Lake Michigan. And at that time, the French called them the "Twightwees" because they made a noise as they were hunting in the timber like the bird the Twightwee, and so they called them the Twightwees. Later on, in about five years later then, they discovered another branch of the same tribe on the southern tip of Lake Michigan, near where Detroit is today; and they called them the Umineck. And where the Miami came from, I'm at a loss because I've done a great deal of research on Miami, how the tribe was named Miami finally, but I haven't run across the answer to that one yet. The French fur traders, of course, became better acquainted with the Miamis and traded with them. And they settled. Certain of the French fur traders settled with the Miami. They picked out their-- fell in love with the beautiful Miami Indian maidens and stayed there, and lived their lives out and raised their families. So the Miami blood lines started thinning out nearly some three hundred years ago. The French were very good to the Miamis for, oh, probably, better than a hundred years. Then, the English started crowding in, and they were both vying for the fur trade with the Miamis. The colonies, of course, were expanding and moving westward constantly, and they were wanting the rich lands of the Miamis in Indiana and Ohio. And so trouble began for the Miamis with the white settlers. Actually, the Miamis had had trouble with the Iroquois.