

come to an end. Whether or not it has been a help for these Indians is a matter of opinion. Great areas of the land are forever lost to the huge chat mountains, acid eaten soil, and a multitude of invaders that came to the mines. In that stretch of nine miles in the mine area are eight towns! : Miami, Commerce, North Miami, Potter, Cardin, Picher, Zincville, and Hockerville. Nearby Quapaw town was also sucked in, in that mass of destruction for the sake of a few who would become wealthy. To-day nearly all the mines are closed down, the holes are being filled with water, but worst of all the streams are being polluted. Perhaps for the majority of Indians it is of little worry, because he has no land anyway. Nevertheless, this is a part of the tragic story of a race of people who had, and yet had not.

The history of the Shawnees in Oklahoma is long and varied. As early as 1600 a band of Shawnees were known to have been in what is now McCurtain County, at a community known today as Shawneetown. Migrations of bands of Indians in early days was common, and it is also known in recorded history that some Shawnees were with the Texas Cherokees. It is believed that the great pressure from the westward movement of the whitemen caused a large group of Shawnees and Senecas to leave their homeland in Ohio in the early 1830s and settle in northeast Oklahoma. The story of the Shawnees is not complete without mention of some of their illustrious leaders. Nearly two centuries ago Tecumseh, Tenskatawa (a brother of Tecumseh), Bluejacket, Longtail, and Black Hoop were household words. The names of Tecumseh and Bluejacket adorn the city limit markers of two Oklahoma towns.

It has been told that among all Indian tribes the Shawnees, Delawares, and Chippewas have languages so similar that each can understand the other. At the Bread Dance and the Green Corn Dance held each year in the Shawnee Hills Shawnees and Delawares meet on common ground.

Back in the Indian Territory days Tom Captain attended the little log school house known as Mobsassin ben, or No. 5 School. The family was successful farmers, and at one time his father, Thomas Captain, was on the Indian Police force of the Seneca Agency. His father related to him that he personally knew Frank James but had never had any trouble with him. The Captain family has used and maintained their family cemetery on their lands for over 80 years and there too this remaining member of his generation will be put to rest some day.

Like most parts of the country in the early days, woods and prairie fires were dreaded and feared. He tells that as a young fellow he and some friends were possum hunting one cold night and had stopped and built a fire to get warm. By accident he threw some rifle shells into the fire and started a woods fire that nearly burned up the whole country.

One of the greatest changes to come to his homeland was the discovery of the lead and zinc deposits. Like many of the men in that country he worked in the mines. The minerals were discovered when someone was drilling a well for water back in about 1903. He tells of the various operations in the mining, smelting, and processing about the industry. To many the mines became a way of life, but not without its side affects. Tom names just a few of the many men who died young from the lung diseases and afflictions from working in the dusty mines.

For a moment we have paused to record some of the experiences and observations in the life of one Indian that lived with his country in the Indian Territory. And Chief Tom Captain of the Eastern Shawnees has done his part to make this a better world.