

PERSONAL HISTORY

(Our next subject is Bill Shawnee, member of the Loyal Shawnee tribe. He is considered an outstanding singer in all northeastern Oklahoma's pow-wow dance. He is a member of the Loyal Shawnee Council at White Oak. His son, Jerome Shawnee is head of the Loyal Shawnee Council or Tribal Council, it's sometimes called. It's really a business council.)

(Irrelevant words for a few minutes.)

Well, my name is William Shawnee, also Tribeoak (?) Shawnee, named after my tribe I suppose. Better known as Bill Shawnee, all through the country. Also try to help out every way I can in ceremonial ways, dancing and singing. What I have learned I am willing to learn the younger generation--teach the younger generation, if they desire to. Because as we all know if they are not interested, that we can't compel them to do things. As I know, in my younger days, coming up, I was interested in it for some reason, somehow. I kept on trying--trying more all time, even though I have been a man that's not been encouraged--I've been discouraged all along. But that didn't discourage me anyway. But I went along and kept on trying. Finally got to where I'm at now.

(Do you speak the language, Mr. Shawnee?)

Um-huh. And as I've tried and tried and tried all along, to help out the best way I can as I know that we--it's just a very few of us in every tribe in the whole United States. We are losing all of our old people all along. And I realize all that, that's the reason why I try to do what I know how--what I have learned from the old people. Wasn't for the old people, I'm not smart enough to say what I'm saying now about the ways and tribal ways, and ceremony ways, or even singing. So, that goes to show that I'm trying to carry on the best--nearest I can and know how. So at this time while I am speaking, I'm caught unprepared to say very much of anything, or speak about anything about our tribe. Our ceremonial ways or anything like that, I haven't given thought, or rehearsed in any which I know--

(What are some of the ceremonies of your tribe?)