

NATIVE AMERICAN CHURCH, CHARTERS

(I'd like to continue talking about the Peyote religion and the Native American Church organization. I wonder if you could explain to me the difference between the Native American Church of North America and the Native American Church of the U.S.)

They came under the Oklahoma charter. It's been modified or duplicated in order that these other states to have similar meetings in their states they had to have this charter. So they took the articles of the state of Oklahoma and made one for Kansas, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, and other states, where they use Peyote. The first one that I recall, when they had a similar trouble with Peyote in the 40's - '46, '47 - well, these Northern tribes wanted a charter and they want to exempt Peyote, they want to do away with it - the law was. I think the Women's Temperance Union of Washington D. C. had to do with that. And we had a conference here at Apache Ben's and I was interpreter there for Apache Ben's. And we got acquainted with some of these Crows, namely Frank Takes Gun and Robert Yellowtail. Robert Yellowtail was superintendent at the Crow Agency at that time and also was candidate for state senator at one time. He and Takes Gun, who were closely related. And he advised us - Yellowtail did - he said, "The only way you can retain that and transport the peyote would be to get a similar charter in Texas. Well, we went down there and we got one. Let's see, there was Apache Ben, Allen Dale, Frank Takes Gun, he's Crow, and Jim Sun Eagle, who is a Pawnee, and then Alfred Chalepah and myself. We signed that charter. And it's good in the state of Texas for 50 years. That's Texas state law. Any charter in Texas is good for 50 years. At the end of 50 years we got to renew that. By doing that, these other states came in under this Native American Church of the U.S., and they included all the states of the union, whereby only that one state - Oklahoma - the state under this charter. And I heard later they made another charter - Native American