

January 20, 1959

T-371

Index side B, first part, recording time 21 minutes.

Informant: Scott Secondine, 80-year-old Shawnee, of Whiteoak community, Craig County, Oklahoma

Subject: Mr. Secondine was born and raised in the Shawnee Hill country of northeastern Rogers County. He has maintained his home in this area all of his life except for a period during World War I when he was in service.

He begins this interview telling of the time at the beginning of the war in 1917. Several men of his area whom he knew had already lost their lives overseas in the war. When he was called up for enlistment, some of his friends and relatives so feared that he too would not come back that they talked him into selling his land allotment and disposing of all of his belongings. Typical of an Indian outlook, he thought if this was to be, then he would leave no connections or ties. He went into the Army and served for the duration, seeing combat overseas. But he did come back. It was not easy to reestablish himself, but he did and lived a content and comfortable life until his retirement.

He tells of the destructiveness of prairie fires in his early days, recalling one fire in which the men worked hard to control the flames, that one man fell dead from exhaustion. His land was on the eastern side of the Shawnee Hills and took in some of the adjoining prairie grassland. Whenever a prairie fire broke out, neighbors from all around would come to help. It was really a fight for survival, as homes, buildings, crops and livestock had been known to be destroyed.

The Shawnees of the old days had a little country school back in their hill country known as Kelly School. A fellow tribesman, George Kelly, gave two acres of his allotment for the school building. Many Shawnee children attended this early day place of learning.

Very near Kelly School, is the ceremonial and stomp dance grounds of these Shawnees. For over eighty years these Indians have preserved and carried on their Green Corn Dance, the Buffalo Dance, the Harvest Dance, and other traditional ceremonies. To the uninformed the Indian dance is not in the parallel of the white man's dance, but instead it is a way of worship, of thanksgiving, a request of the Great Spirit for guidance or help, or any of several religious activities. The stomp dances are held twice each year, or more if occasion demands, and the Shawnees look forward with enthusiasm. Delaware and Cherokee friends also attend these gatherings as guests.

Typical also of the Indian was his love of hunting dogs. Dogs of good breeding for fox hunting, wolf hunting, coon and squirrel hunting all brought a joy and gladness to these men whenever they would have their meetings. Some of the men knew their dogs so well that at night they could tell by bark and bawl what they were after, as well as what position each individual dog was in.