

and one or two close relatives, and perhaps the selected friend. The preacher gathers a small bundle of dry twigs and places them at the head of the grave. He prays and tells the Almighty he is going to light the fire (called Grandpa) in order to light the way for the spirit of the departed. He lights the bundle of twigs and it is allowed to burn itself out. Then all depart. For the next three evenings a close relative returns to the grave and builds a small fire in the same place as the first one. It is believed that the spirit leaves the earth on the fourth day. On the twelfth day after death, a feast is held in the home of the deceased, or in the home of a relative or close friend. The number twelve is important to the Delawares. The burial of the deceased facing west is practiced by only three tribes, as far as is known, - the Delawares, Quapaws and Osages."

Sometime during the 1880s a trading post was established where the town of Copan is now as an exchange center for Delawares and Osages where hides, furs, and other materials were traded. At first the little settlement was called Larston, then changed to Weldon. When the Santa Fe railroad came thru in 1898, a railroad official renamed the place Copan, after a town in Honduras, Central America, but it was never recorded what prompted the final name. One early story was that the town was first called "Cowpens" because of a stockyard there, and the name corrupted to Copan. Copan did enjoy much prosperity in an earlier day when there was of activity in the surrounding oil fields, a shipping point for cattle, and a good trading center for the farming area. Little remains today to show evidence of a happier day. A grocery store, variety store, cafe, post office, and library are about all that remain. The little library has gathered a partial file of the COPAN LEADER, its one-time newspaper, for the period 1910 to 1919. In 1900 Copan got its first post office, and a Delaware Indian, George Gibson, was its first postmaster. In the early days of Copan after it began to grow, it had two disastrous fires, each time burning about half of the business area of some two blocks. In those days they had no fire department or fire fighting equipment, and could not save anything. Mr. Falleaf says that at one time there were several stores, four blacksmith shops, and several other places of business. During the existence of Copan Mr. Falleaf says that it has enjoyed much peace and harmony, in comparison to other early oil boom towns.

Whether because of their small numbers, or because of their closely related customs the Delawares and Shawnees have been very close to each other. Fred says that the two languages are very similar and each can understand the other. As far as the Delawares of his community, he says that probably no more than a dozen men speak the language, however many more women do speak it. It would seem that when Mr. Falleaf's generation passes on, the Delaware language in the Copan area will probably be dead forever. Of interest is his revelation that the Flathead Indians of Montana, the Penobscots, and the Chippewas all speak a language much like the Delaware tongue. He recalls hearing his grandmother talk about the Chippewas whom she had met and talked with, both using the same language. The word Chippewa means "whistler".

When Mr. Falleaf was able to travel, he used to attend the Indian meetings held in the Shawnee Hills of Craig County. Sometimes he would be asked to give a prayer and he would speak in Delaware. Many of his Shawnee friends would tell him that they could understand him very well. The Delawares, like the Shawnees, still have their pow-wows and stomp dance observances. The Delawares will have their next pow-wow the second week in June this year in the Copan area.