

PERRY, SAMUEL

INTERVIEW

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W. T. Holland,
Field Worker.

HOW SEEDS WERE FOUND

by

Samuel Perry, Full Blood Shawnee.

"According to tradition, and as related to me by my grandfather, the Indian received most everything from the Great Spirit, which manifested Himself in various ways and had His being in the rivers, hills, trees, clouds, storms and light ning. So it was with the way we received our seeds, such as corn, beans, pumpkin, watermelon etc. These seeds were usually, if not always, found in the woods.

The Great Spirit sent the light ning which struck and destroyed the largest tree, shattering it to bits, which fell around the ground near its body. Then after due season when the limbs had become dry, the prairie fire came along and burned them, leaving the ground clear from limbs, trash, grass and weed seed, or in other words, leaving a nice bed of loose earth and ashes. In this bed the seeds would be left by the Great Spirit and would grow and make good crops, and here is where and how our people came into possession of corn and other seeds.

Our people, even until later years, raised their gardens where brush and limbs could be found and burned. Then the ground would be dug up and planted, and always produced good crops. The gathering of brush and cutting of small bushes cleared a space, this let the sunshine in, and the crops grew.