

SHAW, A. P.

INTERVIEW

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Otis Hume,  
Field Worker,  
July 2, 1937.

PIONEER AND OLD INDIAN DAYS

Interview with A. P. Shaw,  
Wewoka, Oklahoma.

One time he had a bench warrant for a young man who lived up near the North Canadian River, due north of Wewoka.

This young man lived with his sister in one of those double log houses with a hall between the two rooms. When Mr. Shaw arrived there, the girl was sitting in the hall-way singing. He asked about the young man for whom he had the warrant and she said he was in the field plowing, about a quarter of a mile from the house. Mr. Shaw rode to the field and when the young man saw him, he exclaimed, "Well you have got me" and began pleading with Mr. Shaw to let him stay there and finish his crop as he had a very bright prospect for a good crop. Mr. Shaw told him that he had broken the law and he knew it and that he could take him on to the Muskogee jail if he wanted to, but that he always took consideration of every circumstance that surrounded the welfare of the client and his family. Mr. Shaw told him that as he was a very young man he would help him out if he would do what Mr. Shaw wanted him to. The young man agreed to this and said that he didn't know that

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a marshal could be so kind to anyone, he thought they were all overbearing and would kill you if you made a crooked move. The young man told Mr. Shaw "I am going with you" so they left to go to the house. There the young man wanted to change clothes and asked permission to do so, which was granted. When he went in the house, his sister came out with a guitar and sitting down on the ground began playing. She sat there and played while her brother was getting ready to go with Mr. Shaw, and when her brother came out, ready to go, she was still playing with tears rolling down her cheeks. Turning to Mr. Shaw she said, "please let him come back tonight to stay with me." Mr. Shaw was moved very much by the girl's pleading. He brought the man in to Wewoka and told the judge all about the case and asked that, if possible, the man be allowed bond so he could go back to his sister and his crop. This the judge arranged and the man complied with all orders and from that day on, the man had a different feeling towards the law.

Another day he had a warrant for a man in Okemah and while he was there, news came there that some man had killed a bunch of stock in his field that belonged to some of his neighbors. Walking around town Mr. Shaw found

this man and asked him about killing those cows. He said that he had to kill some of the stock to make his neighbor take care of the rest. Mr. Shaw asked him why he did not see some law about it first, and he answered the law was too slow.

along in the summer about the first of July, the Indians had what they called their Green Corn dance. The purpose of this was to clean up the body. Before they started their Green Corn dance they built a big fire of logs, then put a large pot on the fire which was filled with several different kinds of herbs and water. This was boiled until the water was colored very dark, when it was ready to drink. Then the Indians formed a ring around the fire, drinking the medicine, dancing, singing, and hollowing all night. Then they all go home, ready to eat anything that they wanted without its hurting them.

When the Indians violated any of the tribal laws they were brought before the council, which consisted of the Chief and Band Chiefs. When time came for the trials of the law breakers all the food was furnished free except bread and when the trials were all over, a day was set aside for punishment and all the prisoners turned loose till that day. The day before the execution

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of the sentences imposed, the Chief would total the number of lashes to be administered, dividing that by twenty-five, which would give the total number of switches to be cut and he would order them cut that day. On the day set aside for the execution of the lashes, the prisoners would all be there. They would stand the Indian or negro, whichever it might be, under a tree, tying their feet together, then placing a pole between his legs, resting on top of the rope that was around his feet. Then they tied his hands to the limb of the tree, stretching him up tight. Then some one would get on each end of the pole to hold him down. The Chief would give the signal when to start whipping, which was done by one of the Band leaders. Twenty-five licks were all one man was allowed to whip one person, then they changed switches and the one to do the whipping.

Mr. Shaw was a law enforcement officer in an early day in Indian Territory. - Ed.