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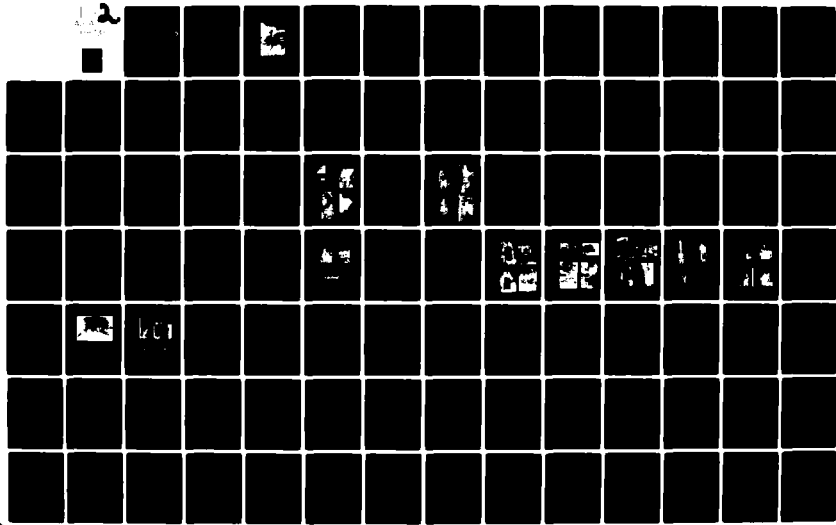
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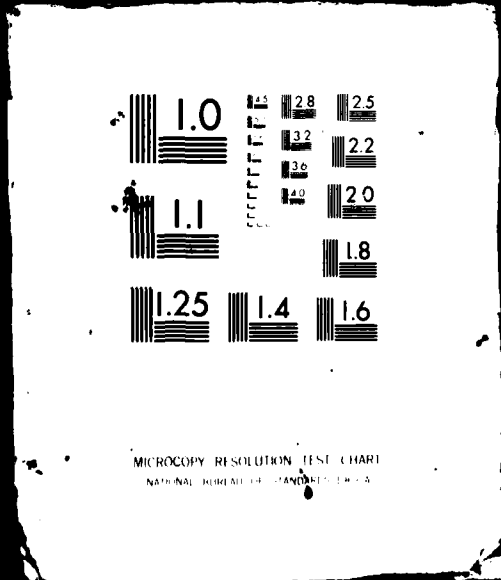


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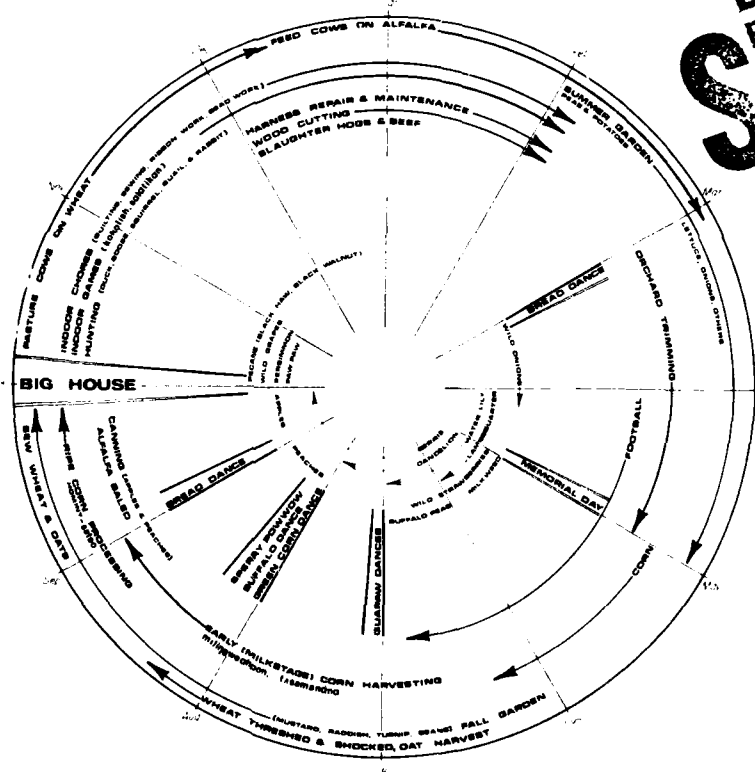
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**TRADITION AND CULTURE CHANGE IN THE  
OKLAHOMA DELAWARE BIG HOUSE  
COMMUNITY: 1867 - 1924**

Contract DACW-56-77-C-0228

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Copan Lake Project DAC-77-C-0228

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**TRADITION AND CULTURE CHANGE IN THE OKLAHOMA**

**DELAWARE BIG HOUSE COMMUNITY: 1867-1924**

**TERRY J. PREWITT**

**PROGRAM OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
THE UNIVERSITY OF TULSA**

**COPAN LAKE PROJECT  
DAC-77-C-0228**

**Prepared for the Tulsa District  
Corps of Engineers: Contract No.**

**DAC-77-C-0228**



BEN HILL AND GRANDCHILD

One of the last two men who served as tamik&t  
in the early 20th Century Delaware Big House Church

*Notes on file*

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the preparation of this report many individuals have contributed time and support which aided in its completion. The US Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District, and the University of Tulsa have provided the essential administrative and academic support for the project. In particular, Ms. Daphne Dervin, of the Corps of Engineers, provided direct encouragement and support throughout the work. Among the faculty and staff of the University of Tulsa several individuals also deserve special mention. Dr. Garrick Bailey discussed many aspects of the work with me throughout the year, and contributed ideas on traditionalism in Native American life. My student assistant, Suzanne Ferguson, aided in bibliographic work and in organization of photographic files, as well as in important fieldwork and documentary study associated with the demographic section of the report. The entire staff of the Instructional Media services at the University of Tulsa gave tremendous aid in processing the photographic materials. Special thanks should go to Brenda Winkler for her excellent copy work from old photographs. In addition, Suzanne Ferguson and Sirkku Männikkö prepared the final photographic illustrations. Karen Haworth drew most of the other figures and provided editorial assistance and criticism. A large number of secretaries and other support personnel aided me in working through the various drafts of the manuscript. Barbara Gravely and Celia Wetherall typed the initial full drafts, and Virginia Arvidson and Mary Howell prepared the final manuscript including the complex tables. Their efforts in keeping a difficult manuscript in good form are to be commended.

A heavy debt of gratitude is owed to Nora Thompson Dean, James Rementer, Charley Dean, and Louise Dean. Nora provided information and access to photographs and documents she has collected over the years, making my search for resources on Oklahoma Delaware far easier and less costly than it otherwise might have been. Jim has kindly allowed me to use some of his photos and other resources. My family and I have been graciously accepted by the entire Dean household—indeed, my deep feelings for the Dean family cannot be adequately expressed. In addition, special thanks must also go to Glenn McCartlin, who also provided photographs used in the report, Leonard Thompson, and Lucy Parks Blalock. All contributed to my work in important ways. Also, Ruth Blalock Jones kindly allowed me to use her manuscript of taped interviews with a number of contemporary Delaware elders, collected in the early 1970's.

The Philbrook Museum staff, especially Isabel MacIntosh, aided me in substantial ways in my study of the Big House religion. The museum was kind in allowing me to both view their holdings of Delaware materials and photograph key items used in the Big House Church. The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, also allowed me to use photographs taken by Mark Raymond Harrington during his fieldwork in Oklahoma early in this century.

Other individuals who spent time with me discussing aspects of the material presented in this report are Mr. Cecil Mills, Mr. Don Wilson, Dr. Herb Kraft, Dr. James Howard, Dr. Susan Roark-Calnek, Mr. David Osterreicher, Ms. Dori Penny, and Mrs. Dorothy Mettling Gaston. To these individuals and many others who cannot be named, but who touched this work during its preparation, I am deeply indebted.

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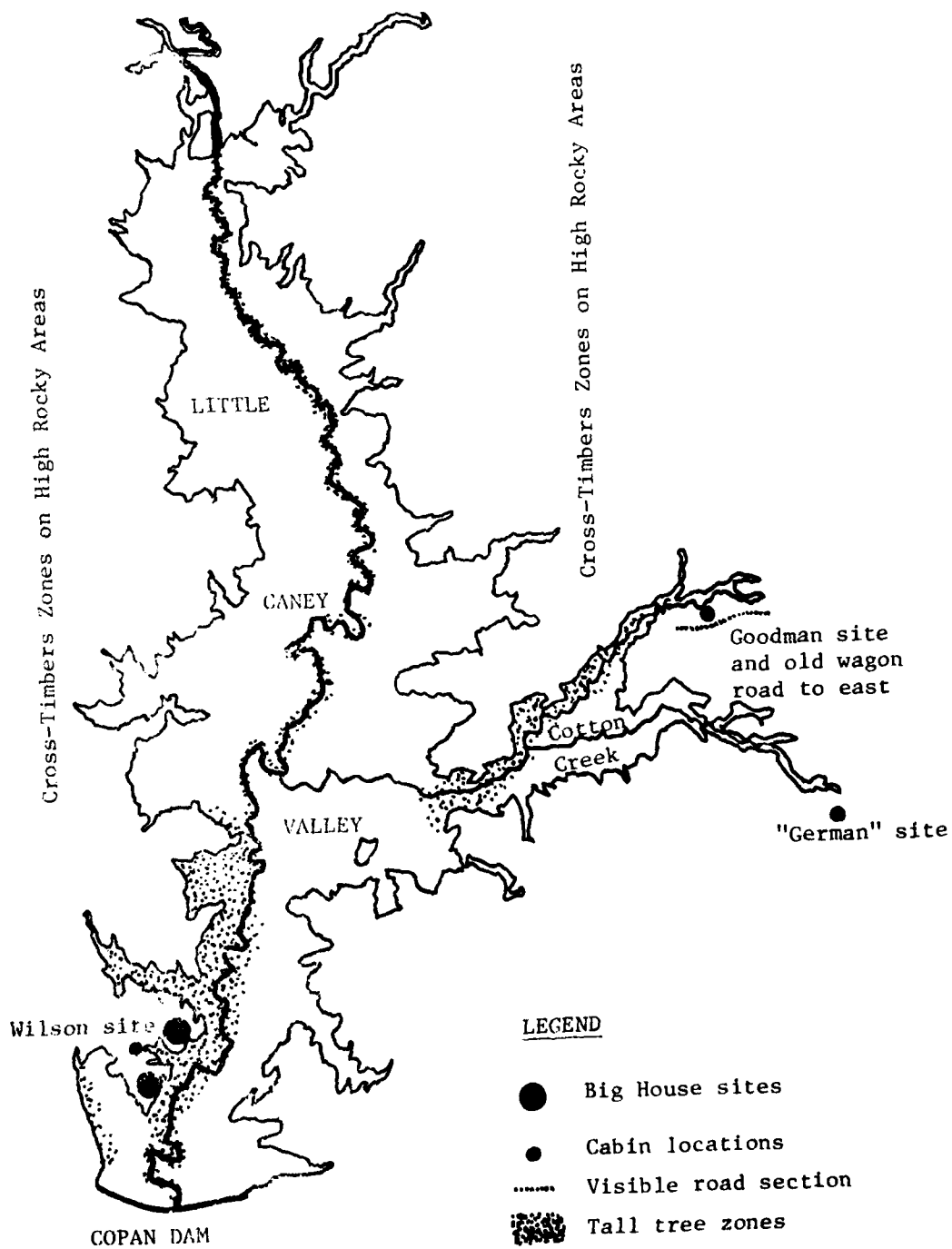
TRADITION AND CULTURE CHANGE IN THE OKLAHOMA  
DELAWARE BIG HOUSE COMMUNITY: 1867-1924

INTRODUCTION

During the period from June 1979 through May 1980 the University of Tulsa, Laboratory of Archaeology conducted investigations of the cultural history of the Copan Lake area (Map 1), located on the drainage of the Little Caney River between its confluence with the Caney River and the town of Caney, Kansas. The investigations represent Phase III of a multi-year project funded by the US Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District Office, under contract DACW56-77-C-0228 between the Corps of Engineers and the University of Tulsa.

This report represents the ethnohistoric portion of the contracted work, stipulated in paragraph 2.b. of the contract Appendix B, "scope of services" for Phase III of investigations at Copan Lake. This initial ethnohistoric investigation was designed to accomplish certain limited goals:

1. An assessment of published and unpublished literature, records, and archival material relating to the lake area;
2. An assessment of the introduction of agricultural systems into the projected area;
3. An overview of historically known groups in the project area, the ecology of the projected area, and the settlement sequence of the historic groups;
4. A plan for the interpretation of this information to the general public.



Map 1. Historic site locations in the Copan Lake area.

These investigations are intended to augment the limited planned work on the historic timespan which formed part of the original mitigation proposal. The study was suggested because several extremely important historic sites deserve interpretation and protection, in spite of the fact that they cannot be fruitfully studied through archaeological techniques. Additionally, the efforts of the Laboratory of Archaeology to develop a long-term ecological picture of human adaptations in the Little Caney Calley may be expanded by consideration of the historic human approaches to the land.

The Phase III ethnohistoric investigations involved several rather distinctive kinds of activities. An effort was made to identify as many potential kinds and sources of data pertinent to the historic period as are available. The kinds of data fall into four broad classes: archaeological sites and artifacts, oral histories, documents, and published literature. Sources of each data class are highly variable, but may be summarized as follows:

**Archaeological Sites.** In addition to the recorded historic archaeological sites represented by Rohn and Smith (1972), there are numerous recent farmsteads, wells, drilling sites, and other cultural features of limited historic interest. Among these sites, however, are a few very early settlement locations, roads, cabin sites, and standing cabin remains. The investigation of the prehistoric site 34WN29 resulted in the identification, through Mr. Cecil Mills, of an early cabin site and road location, for example, which would never have been found during a surface survey of the land. This cabin site was tested as part of the excavation of the site, and through Mr. Mills and other residents of the region, several standing period cabins were visited and photographed, a late 19th century barn was located, and information concerning several other places of architectural interest was gathered. Both of the sites known to have been of religious significance in the Delaware people of

Washington County were visited on several occasions, but no archaeological materials or suspicious contexts were observed at either location.

The combined direct archaeological information, extant buildings, and photographic record of historic sites was further augmented by a search for material items relating to the pioneer era, especially the early period of Delaware settlement in Oklahoma. Museum collections, personally owned material items of traditional Delaware dress, and the utility items derived from the archaeological testing at 34WN29 all contributed to a picture of life on the Indian farmsteads and in the Oklahoma community of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Oral Histories.** There are many individuals who remember life during the late settlement era and period of early Oklahoma statehood, and a few who have exact, if limited, knowledge of the settlement era of the post-Civil War years. Among these individuals intensive work was conducted with two individuals, Mrs. Nora Thompson Dean and Mr. Charles Dean, on aspects of Delaware life and farming practices of the early 1900's. Other information on farming was obtained from Mr. Henry Bellmeyer and Mr. Cecil Mills. This work suggests some significant differences in Indian and White farming practices, and is important to our overall understanding of human adjustments to the particular landscape of the Cross-timbers and prairies of the region. Information on the Big House religion was gained mainly from Nora Thompson Dean, as well as from brief conversations with Mrs. Lucy Parks Blalock and Mr. Leonard Thompson. Indirect oral historic information on the Big House was obtained through Mrs. Ruth Blalock Jones' (n.d.) manuscript of taped interviews with several individuals who had at one time participated in or attended the Delaware Big House Church. The importance of Mrs. Jones' work cannot be overstressed, since several of the people she inter-

viewed has since passed away. Thus, the potential now for oral historic work on the Big House religion is less than that for reconstructing agricultural practices, community involvement, and other similar cultural and social matters.

**Documents.** *There are numerous documentary sources pertinent to the ecology, settlement, and social history of the Little Caney Valley. The most important of these documents are those pertaining to the Delaware population, the Lenape speakers of Washington County, since that population represents the most visible early group in the area, and the early people for whom the greatest body of records is extant. For the period prior to 1867 documentary information on the region is somewhat less plentiful and specific. Still, there are some interesting papers and some published diaries and journals which relate to the pre-Civil War period. The primary difficulty is in associating specific references to the Copan Lake area prior to 1867, while after that date there are familial, and census records pertaining to the Delaware residents, as well as obvious local direct associations of the Big House Religion.*

Most of the documents pertinent to the Delaware are related to a much larger population than the target population of this investigation. Therefore, they have been studied to assess their suitability in developing a detailed picture of life in the Traditional Delaware community which supported the two known Big House Churches of the Copan Lake area. Other interests in the history of the broader Delaware community have been pursued by several authors. The focus of this work stresses the most important historic sites at Copan Lake, and an essentially neglected set of historic questions surrounding Big House practices and the Big House community. Documents which are not directly pertinent to the scope of work are not emphasized, then, while those specifically contributive to the problems of Big House religion and commun-

ity are stressed.

**Published Literature.** There is a considerable amount of published literature pertaining to the Delaware Indians in Oklahoma and in other geographic areas in which they have been historically associated. The General Bibliography of this report includes the most important historical and linguistic works discussing the Lenape people generally, and the major articles and books on the Oklahoma Lenape communities. Included in the bibliography are manuscripts prepared for publication but not yet in print. In addition, other general anthropological and historical publications consulted during the preparation of this report are included in a list of Additional References Cited. These sources are representative of culture-theoretic concerns and ecological history of the Copan Lake region. Finally, a few works have been listed in a separate bibliography of Peripheral Delaware Sources. These ancillary materials are articles and books not cited in the text, but potentially of interest to students of the Delaware cultural history and the region.

## ANALYTICAL METHODS AND ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report presents a historical sketch written from an anthropological perspective. It is the task of the anthropological historian to capture the diverse lifestyles of people who are outside the dominant cultural trends normally treated in political, social or economic history. Such an activity involves direct presentation of descriptive cultural material coupled with limited analysis to translate foreign logical constructs into a form that can be better appreciated by people who lack specific "traditional" keys to interpretation of events and practices, in this case the people of the dominant American culture. The product of anthropological history is similar to ethnography in its attention to practical

descriptions and social structural concerns, but it differs in that it pursues direct historical connections of people and events over specific periods of time. Thus, the "ideal" conceptions of culture common in ethnography are blended with a presentation of "real" cases of social action and cultural practice.

A number of writing devices are helpful in achieving the union of ethnographic and historical interests. First, at times the incorporation of personal statements by individuals who have lived in the cultural system under study provide important clues about the special characteristics of life during particular periods. Although this report does not include detailed life-history narratives, some long personal notes have been included when they promised to provide depth of understanding for complex situations. Second, it is also sometimes helpful to provide encapsulated information in a more literary written style rather than as strict description. This enables the expression of qualities of mood or context that are difficult to capture in a standard analytic presentation. The ideas and behaviors of other cultures may seem to have obvious meanings when viewed from an outside perspective, but these perceptions are usually far from accurate. A literary presentation produces a focus for interpretation by the outsider. It is hoped that the use of such devices in the presentation of the Big House religion will aid the reader in placing more technical descriptions in a proper cultural focus.

Anthropological history usually also proceeds from certain theoretical presuppositions. This work reflects most strongly a kind of analysis associated with the orientation of "cultural materialism" in anthropology, the primary proponent of which is Marvin Harris (1968, 1979). Strict cultural materialism is a research strategy which seeks to document the many senses in which the large-scale value orientations and social structures of people are rooted in basic "material" conditions of existence. In much of the culture materialist literature the expressions of

causality in culture change are explicitly grounded in matters of subsistence activity and technology. This work sees these same causal connections as primary in the case of culture change operative in the traditional Delaware community of Oklahoma. It is apparent to me, based upon my brief involvement in Delaware studies, that characteristics of population structure, settlement patterns, and technological orientations were instrumental in creating the directions of culture changes resulting in contemporary conditions. However, I do not arrive at these kinds from the *a priori* stance of many of the contemporary culture materialists or related Marxist scholars. The significance of material conditions to the situation under investigation is more a result of the "frontier" context of the case and the particular form of religious notions and social structure brought to Oklahoma by the traditional Delaware. In other contexts, or perhaps with other groups, we might encounter decisive ideological or social structural factors guiding culture change, and find that demographic or ecologic considerations played only a small role in transforming lifeways. In this opinion, I share in the more traditional orientations of such social theorists as Georg Simmel, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Emile Durkheim, and in the broad field of linguistic-like theories of culture associated with the structuralism of Claude Levi-Strauss and the theory of themes of Morris Opler. It is through the weight of a grounded analysis of a range of ideas, behaviors, and material conditions that I arrive in this case at evidence for the kinds of situations that give special force to material causes in the dynamic of cultural systems.

The organization of this report reflects the fundamental results of my analysis. The demographic and settlement background of the Delaware population in Oklahoma is treated first to lay the groundwork for discussion of the Indian farm. The constraints of population size, marriage potentials, and the organization of settlement in the Little Caney Valley and surrounding areas are outlined.

Second, the yearly cycle of events and work are presented as an ideal construction, and the extent to which the ideal was practiced and changed through time is discussed. Finally, the Big House religion of the traditional Delaware is placed in a historical perspective noting the relations of changes in practice with successive generations and the other material factors surrounding life in the pioneer and post-pioneer eras. Other perspectives on change, however, are important considerations for students of Delaware culture in Oklahoma. The works of Roark-Calnek (1978, 1979) and Miller (1973, 1976a, 1979) provide significant perspective for understanding the extent to which the overall "ecology" of Delaware life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was impinged upon by strictly "ideational" factors.

This work, then, should be read in the context of the rather large prior literature on the Oklahoma Delaware. To the extent that it portrays Delaware life in technical terms of demography and ecology, my investigation is limited in scope and detail. The balance of these interests with more humanistic goals of reporting has not generally come as easily as I would have liked, and it is my hope that a much more comprehensive treatment of the traditional Delaware in Oklahoma can be accomplished soon. The reader should keep in mind that demography and ecology serve only as a framework of the actual history of any people—the potentials for many kinds of directions of change and stability are constrained by the framework, but never wholly determined by it. Thus, to lay stress on the material aspect of life is to take a convenient path to the realities of changes and continuities through manifestations that are easily observed and reported upon. The whole story requires an understanding of feelings and attitudes. And most of all, it would be an error to associate "traditionalism" with static patterns of the material past, for the spirit of identification with Delaware tradition is as strong today in belief and practice. Within that traditional spirit there have been ample

changes in self-identification through cultural forms, on a material level especially, but to apply such terms as "degeneration" or "stagnation" to the socio-cultural development of the traditional Delaware is a grave error. Rather, it is proper to seek the patterns of form which characterize the dynamics of recent Delaware history, and to know that the diverse patterns which occur in succession strongly maintain some common fundamentals of belief and lifestyle.

#### THE BACKGROUND OF DELAWARE SETTLEMENT

In 1867, approximately 1000 Delaware Indians, speakers of an Algonquian language generally referred to as Lenape, began to take up residence in what is now the state of Oklahoma under agreements with the United States and with other groups of Indians already located in Oklahoma and Indian Territories. This movement was to be the last major migration of Delaware groups in what had been a long and sad series of travels from the distant east coast, through Ohio and Indiana, then west of the Mississippi into southern Missouri, then Kansas, and finally to the "Indian lands" (see Weslager 1972, 1978; also see the anthropological overviews of Newcomb 1956a, Thurman 1973b, and Roark-Calnek 1978). It was also a movement which would produce the greatest change in material, behavioral and social traditions of any yet encountered by these peoples. First, the Oklahoma migrations reduced the Delaware to several enclaves, each too small to maintain continued marriages within its ranks. This resulted in a loss of demographic identity, and was a primary force in the ultimate change of cultural identity for most Delaware in Oklahoma (see also Thurman 1973 on social change prior to the Oklahoma migration). Second, each of the Delaware groups was only part of a larger community of Indian peoples and later whites who dominated political and economic in-

terests of the region. These conditions led to severe reduction in social interactions necessary to cultural maintenance on the level of daily life (Roark-Calnek 1979), and contributed to the adoption of a somewhat broader perspective within Oklahoma's Native American community by many Delaware people (Howard 1955, Newcomb 1955). Thus, a dispersed and politically diverse Delaware population underwent a series of rapid cultural transformations, corresponding more or less to generational turnover in the settlement sequence of the Oklahoma community.

The particular Delaware people about whom this investigation is centered are the settlers of northern Washington County, Oklahoma, and their children and grandchildren — three generations spanning the initial settlement to the present. These were perhaps the most traditional Delaware of all who came south in the 1867 migration, although they were weakly linked with the conservative Christian factions and became legally entwined with the Cherokee Nation. Indeed, all Delaware of northeast Oklahoma are today legally considered "Cherokee," in spite of vigorous protests from most concerned individuals who have lived Lenape culture and who retain respect for the integrity of the grandfathers and grandmothers of the Delaware people.

The first generation of Delaware raised in Oklahoma were exposed to white-controlled schools, technological innovations and market conditions of the late 19th Century, vigorous attacks on traditional religious practices and the use of the Lenape language, and ultimately a nationalized world of new cultural and political obligations. Massive, imposed changes were the practice of Indian agents, and part of the praxis of life. But for the most traditional of the people, opposition from the acculturated Delaware was perhaps more difficult to contend with than opposition from non-Indians and government officials. Indeed, many whites and most other Indians found it easier to allow the traditional

Lenape to continue in the practice of elements of the "old way" than did Delaware people of the Christian community. This is because the central expressions of traditionalism in the settler communities associated with the towns of Dewey and Copan were the religious observances of the Big House ceremonies, certain other religious rites, mortuary feasts, and common practices which were deemed either "pagan" or at least an embarrassment to the Indians who had adopted white religion and customs. An intense factionalism developed in Kansas and Oklahoma, then, and as much as the Christian Delaware sought to redeem themselves by bringing their fellows to repentance, the traditional people resisted the loss of a culture and identity which was proud in action and in its history, and which they regarded as necessary for the well-being of all people.

The factionalism of the settlement era has continued into the present (Roark-Calnek 1978), and is now manifest in the diverse groups seeking "differentiation from" versus "identification in" the Cherokee tribe. And it is the community of Delaware who maintained traditions from whom the arguments for a Delaware identity are lodged, especially the people of the communities of Dewey and Copan. The elders of the traditional people are the second generation of children raised in Oklahoma. These present-day elders were raised during the period of early statehood, attended the Big House with their parents and grandparents, learned the Lenape language before they learned English, and possess the last active knowledge of a cultural tradition which was among the first encountered by Europeans on the North American continent. These people have passed from the time of horse farms to the space age, and lived in cultural worlds more different than simple metaphors can portray.

Thus, we embark here on a brief study intended to cover a vast ground of five generations of cultural and historical distance. The work is limited, of course, to several pri-

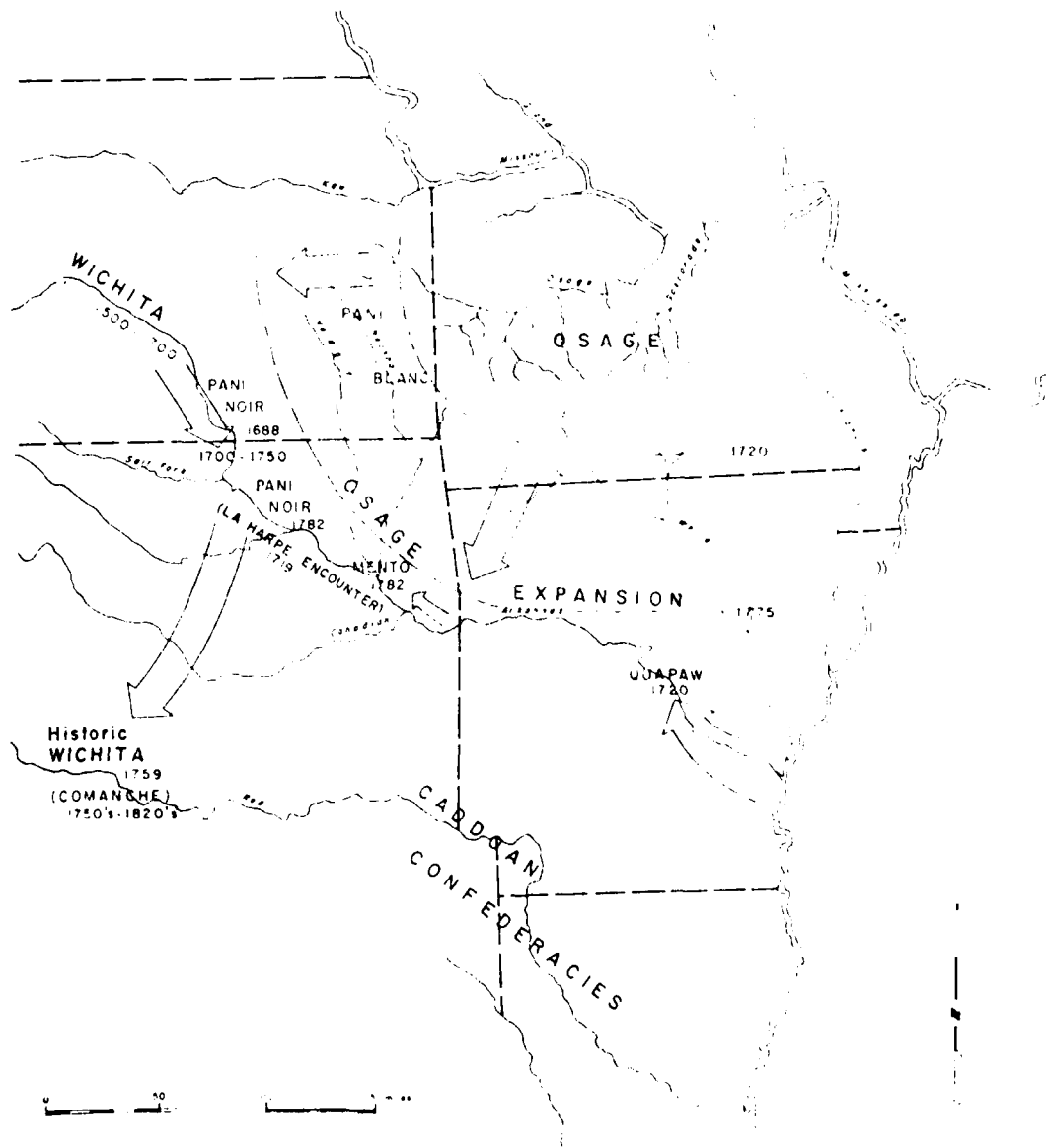


mary concerns determined in part by historical circumstances and in part by consideration of contract priorities and prior anthropological studies. First, the primary focus of this work is upon the Big House community. There can be no question that the two Big Houses located on the west side of the Copan Lake area, on ridges overlooking the Little Caney River Valley constitute the most important historic localities used by any group in the area covered by the Copan Lake investigations. The considerable past literature on aspects of the Big House religion includes work by Mark Harrington (1921) and later studies by Frank Speck (1931, 1937). Much recent work on Delaware culture and religion has been accomplished by Jay Miller (n.d. 1973a, 1976b, 19791, 1979b). However, most prior work on the Big House has concentrated on definition of the rites themselves, from either a structuralist perspective or in the sense of a single ideal historical reconstruction. Such ethnographic work gives a general picture of the traditional ceremonies, but tells us much less of the actual observances from year to year or generation to generation. This study seeks to illustrate some of the elements of change in tradition which occurred as a result of generational changes in the settlement era and period of early statehood, as well as to document the Big House practitioners as people, to illustrate their many roles in the ceremonies and in the community, and to understand how and why the Big House observances came to an end.

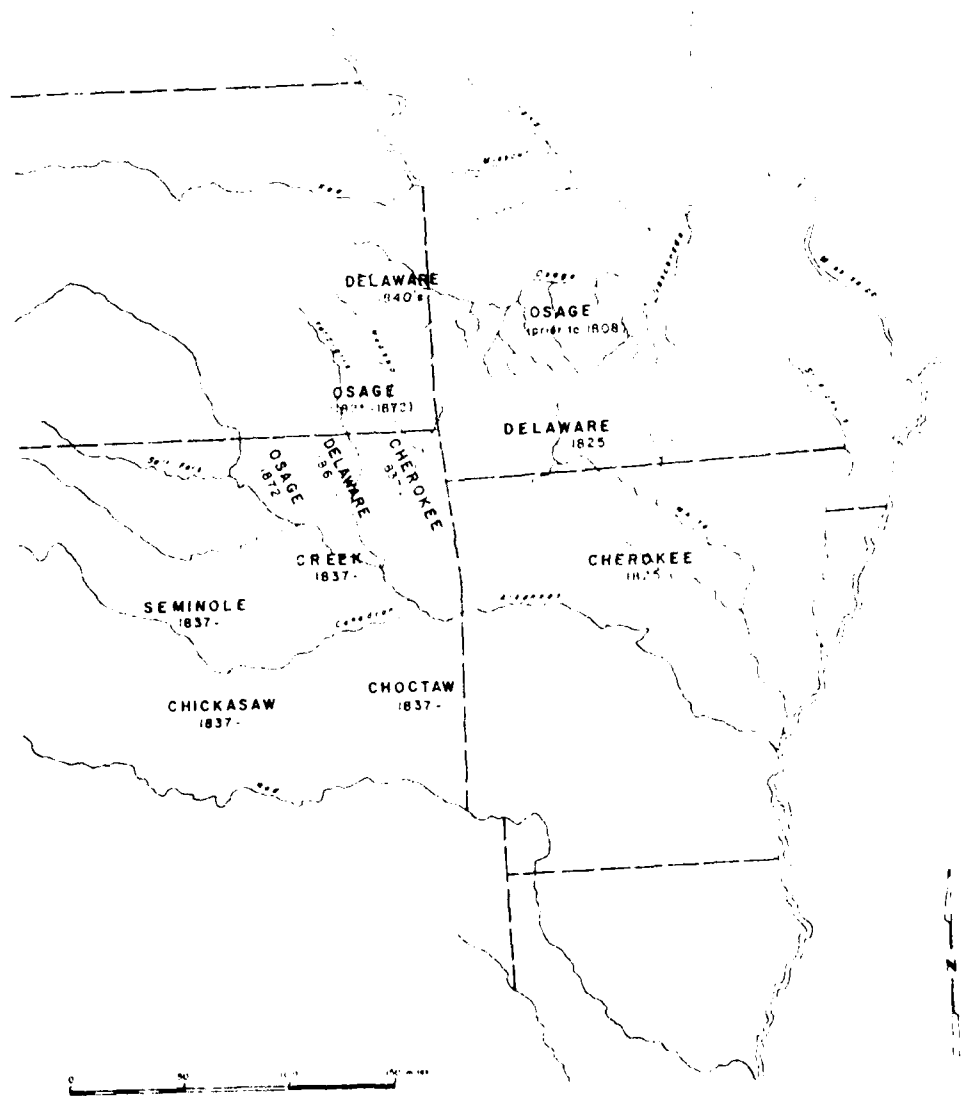
To the extent that this first goal of study is fulfilled, a second focus of investigation must emerge. The Big House community was a settler community. It included individuals of diverse background, orientation, and skill, all of whom shared the difficult experience of beginning an existence essentially from scratch. Thus, the basic living conditions of the settlement era and after are important to an overall understanding of the people. Further, the relationships of the religious and symbolic world to the material realities of

daily life are central to understanding the meaning of "traditional" in the Delaware community. Therefore, we must investigate the yearly agricultural cycle of the Delaware farmers along with the yearly ceremonial and social cycle in the Indian settlements. In this interest, it is necessary to consider the factors which favored and disfavored Indian agricultural successes and continuity on the land. We may also compare the organization and activity of the Indian farmer to that of the white farmer, and see some important features of pioneer-Indian life.

The Delaware were preceded in the Little Caney Valley by a few isolated families of Cherokee background, the Osage, and Plains Village peoples of probable Caddoan linguistic background (see Maps 2 and 3). The material and documentary record for these earlier historic peoples is quite sparse, but the overall picture during the historic period is one of only isolated homesteads. It is with the introduction of the Delaware population, then, that the greatest impetus for agricultural development in the Little Caney Valley occurred. The earlier history of the area involves the establishment of controls over the region by the Osage during the early 1700's (see Bailey 1973). The populations displaced by the Osage were broadly identified as "pawnee" (people the Osage raided to obtain slaves) by the French, and were associated with the widespread Plains Village archaeological cultures that immediately proceeded European contact. These groups were probably Caddoan speakers who ultimately were known as the historic Wichita bands (see Prewitt 1980, Newcomb and Field 1967). They may also have ties to the Caddoan archaeological cultures of the lower portions of the Arkansas River in Oklahoma, although such a connection remains highly speculative in the absence of a firm cultural synthesis of the eastern Oklahoma Caddoan prehistory. The apparent lack of major sites in the Little Caney Valley relating to the latest prehistoric cultures of the region is not surprising, given



Map 2. Protohistoric groups in the Copan Lake region.



Map 3. Historic Indian groups in the Copan Lake region.

the tendency of these groups to place major encampments along the largest drainages (see Bell 1973, Hofman 1975, Lintz 1974, Wedel 1959). Small seasonal camps relating to these and earlier peoples and perhaps also to groups located farther east (see Freeman 1962, Bell and Baerreis 1951) have been found throughout the region.

The Osage control over the region was never paired with occupancy, but as early as 1719 Osage warriors moved in the area with ease (see Newcomb and Field 1967:246-50). By the early 19th Century the Osage were recognized as the prime force throughout northeastern Oklahoma, and this control continued until land was ceded to the United States government to make a place for the Cherokee. Early in the century, then, both Cherokee and Osage communities were established (Map 3), followed in the post-Civil War period by the Delaware migration and relocations of other groups among the Five Civilized Tribes (see McReynolds 1964).

Proximity of the study area to Osage county makes the Osage an important group to the Little Caney Valley development. In many respects the Osage were more important to the traditional Delaware of northern Washington County than were the Cherokee. Both Osage and early Cherokee settlers erected log structures in the region and many isolated Cherokee farmsteads dotted the landscape adjacent to the Osage lands. But the major concentrations of Cherokee were to the south and east, and only one certain pre-Civil War cabin site is known in the Little Caney drainage. This was the Goodman Cabin, located on site 34WN29, tested as part of this investigation using archaeological techniques. Yet early after the Delaware occupancy of the region, a young Delaware boy was killed by a group of Osage while hunting. This incident nearly precipitated war between the groups but hostilities were avoided by the establishment of a series of "smokes" in which both Delaware and Osage took part (Weslager 1972: 428-30). This was not the only associa-

tion of Delaware and Osage, for both groups were prominent in the establishment of the Native American Church in northeast Oklahoma (see Harrington 1921; Newcomb 1956b; Thurman 1973a). Thus, although relations between the Osage and Delaware were strained, they were probably more positive for the traditional-oriented Delaware than were relations with the Cherokee, especially the Christian elements, or those Delaware who had adopted white religion.

Another people of importance to the Delaware is the Shawnee tribe. The Shawnee are also of the Algonquian language family, and entered the Indian Territories as early as the 1830's in several areas. The most important group of Shawnee to the traditional Delaware community is centered on the annual ceremonies conducted at White Oak, Oklahoma, about 45 miles east of Bartlesville. Some families of Delaware attended the Bread Dances, Green Corn Dance, Buffalo Dance, and other activities at White Oak, all of which were similar to Delaware observances of earlier days. Indeed, there are some superficial similarities of the layout and organization of these activities to the Big House practices, and as the two groups intermarried many Shawnee Delaware attended the Delaware church annually. The juxtaposition of the diverse Indian groups in Oklahoma created many such cross-tribal ties of association, forming the basis of broader Indian identity and common experience which dominates much of Indian life in the region today (see Strickland 1980). But these ties are not the primary focus of this study, except to the extent that they were manifest early in the Delaware experience in Oklahoma.

With this brief background of the group associations of the traditional Delaware community we may move to a final note on landscape and settlement association in northern Washington County. Basic geological and biotic background for the Little Caney Valley has been presented in several earlier reports of this series (see especially Henry 1977a,

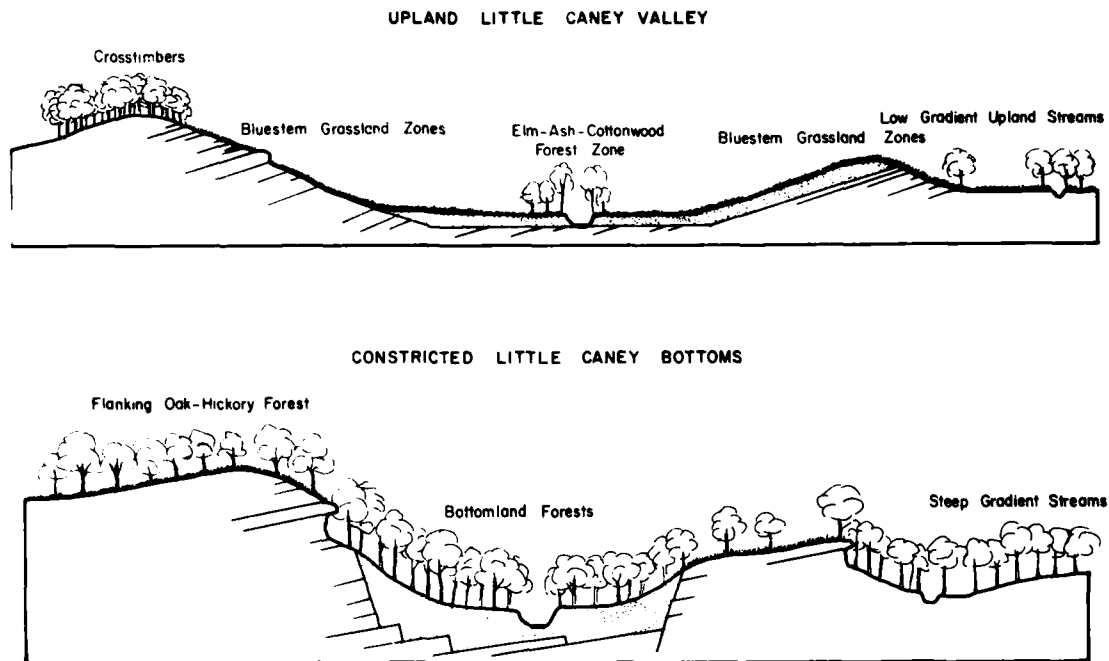


Figure 1. Physiographic cross-sections of the Little Caney Valley system showing major vegetation associations.

Prewitt 1980). It is important for us to understand certain changes in the appearance of the region, which have occurred during the past century of settlement and development. When the Delaware encountered the region in 1967 it held the same basic native plant associations seen today, but the distribution of forested areas and grasslands was quite different and at more mature stages of growth than at present. Figure 1 illustrates the basic associations of each physiographic situation in the Little Caney Valley. There are two kinds of valley-bottom situations that influenced the plant associations strongly in the past, and which to some extent are still reflected throughout the Copan Lake region. In the "upland" sections of the valley there is a relatively wide floodplain, the area most heavily committed to agricultural development in modern times, which formerly supported mixed grasses, and along drainages, forests of elm, ash, and cottonwood trees. The grasslands extended up the rockier colluvial slopes where they gave way in places to dense stands of Cross-timbers vegetation. In more constricted bottomland areas there were formerly well established forests augmenting the elm-ash-cottonwood associations with oak-hickory stands, including some tall species of oaks. Many of the side streams were grassier during the period of settlement, or were cleared early by pioneers establishing small farms outside of the major floodplain district. Some of these streams, such as Cotton Creek, now support stands of younger bottomland forest. Thus, during the settlement era forests were denser, more mature, and more restricted in their extent, while side valleys provided much more suitable farmsteads offering mixed forests and grassland zones. In addition, there has probably been less overall change in the appearance of the higher lateral vegetation associations than in the floodplains of rivers and streams.

The introduction of a large human population in the Copan Lake region brought about this general transformation. Human

needs for building material and fuel were satisfied from local resources as much as possible throughout the settlement era but the migration of the Delaware population signaled the real beginnings of the ecological transformation of the region toward modern conditions. Before the Delaware migration farms in the Lake area were widely dispersed, and the local impacts of resource use did not heavily impact the natural biotic system. We may turn, then, to direct consideration of the demography of the Delaware settlement era from 1867 through 1898, and review the nature of population features and family structures which are central to the historic period transformation of the Little Caney Valley.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF THE OKLAHOMA DELAWARE COMMUNITY

Demography treats the most fundamental conditions of community identity. Births, deaths, marriages, age-sex structures, and the patterns of mobility of people define the potentials of productivity in human groups, and serve as constraints determining the success of diverse human strategies of existence. Social networks are in part demographic networks of marriage and generational relationships, and cultural systems are patterns of life which yield distinctive demographic dynamics. Thus, demographic factors taken in association with cultural orientations can inform us of important causes of change in social history.

As much as demographic patterns are linked to specific cultures, they are also linked to kinds of situations. The demography of mobile groups is quite different from that of sedentary farmers; these situations are different still from the demography of cities. And the demography of the frontier is especially distinctive. The frontier is dominated by the young. It is dominated usually by men. Its population is rapidly changing, and less predictable than other populations as to directions of growth and development toward stability. Indeed, a frontier population is similar in many respects to an immature ecosystem. It is generalized in its potentials, and the final outcome of the frontier demographic experience often rests on diverse chance conditions. When people enter a new area, even one which is substantially similar to their prior geographic association, the ability of individuals to adjust to new land and routines of existence is tested. The collective result of the test is measured in demographic realities — deaths and births direct the ties of success and failure. Thus, in many respects, the structure of a frontier population may provide a strong impetus for cultural change when the demographic trends generated by a particular culture and particular natural conditions do not mesh.

The Oklahoma Delaware represented a population welded on the frontier of the ex-

panding United States. As a demographic unit the population was reasonably well defined, even in the late 19th Century, but it was small in comparison to other groups moving into the Oklahoma area. As a social network the Delaware were diverse, including speakers of dialects with independent prior geographic ties, and religious actions moving in entirely different cultural directions. Even though the Delaware populations of Kansas and Oklahoma can be treated as a "unit" for analysis, there were in fact several social and cultural isolates within it that would be worthy of separate treatment.

Surrounding the settlement of the Delaware in Oklahoma were the constraints of prior Cherokee deeds. There was much less choice of land than in earlier Delaware moves, but a much greater choice than there was for most white settlers of the region. The greatest limitations on individual land and the potentials for community integrity would come with the allotment—the reallocation of land at the turn of the century would disrupt the original Delaware land claims in Oklahoma. But the initial purchases of the Delaware Tribe accomplished the juxtaposition of people of similar mind within reasonably well-defined regions (Rorark-Calnek 1977). This feature of locational choice provided at least the possibility of demographic continuity of a "Delaware" community, a network of people living as a social isolate through the long term of settlement and regional development. In the end, as we shall see, such demographic continuity was to be short-lived, deterred in part by the broad geographic spread and factionalism of the small migrant groups, and substantially undermined by the broader population development of the Cherokee Nation and Oklahoma. In retrospect, it is easy to see how a small tribe might be brought under extreme pressures by a situation which was first a frontier, and second nearly a sub-division.

## DELAWARE POPULATION TRENDS FROM 1862 - 1898

The Kansas Delaware population was enumerated in 1862. The register includes 982 names, an age listing for each individual, and an indication of sex. Most of the individuals in the list were noted by their Delaware names, although at even this early date many English names were included, especially for the youngest members of the tribe. In general, only one name was given for each person, unlike the later census materials which often list both an English and Delaware name. Thus, there is only partial record linkage between the 1862 register and later census materials. Individuals listed by their Delaware name in 1862, but only by their English name in later enumerations are difficult to identify across successive documents. In addition, different orthographic systems were used in the lists, so considerable work is necessary to interpret the same Delaware names on different census rolls. In spite of these difficulties, most of population can be traced through the records to aid in age checks and interpretation of household and familial relationships.

The 1962 census was augmented by a list of Delawares prepared by John G. Pratt in 1967. A version of this list was also produced in 1898 that includes descendants and heirs of the immigrant Delaware through 1898. This later document gives the name of each person on the 1867 register and indicates whether the person was still living at the time of its compilation. Further, it provides an identification and age of children and grandchildren for each deceased individual on the 1867 enumeration. Because of multiple listings of persons born after 1967, the information of the 1898 register has been transferred to a card file for analysis. This provides a reasonably accurate 1898 census totalling 696 individuals. The 1898 register is a valuable resource for kinship reconstructions of the Delaware community, but it does not allow accurate household reconstruction. Nor can

valid household reconstructions be based upon the 1862 or 1967 enumerations, since plural marriages were not consistently noted during the roll preparations. For these most of the analysis of demographic trends in the Oklahoma Delaware community stresses age-sex balances and general population trends.

As an aid in this analysis I draw comparisons to other frontier populations in Oklahoma. The comparative data relate to the rural population located around the town of Okarche, a community founded through the land runs opening the Unassigned Lands in 1889 and the Cheyenne-Arapaho Lands in 1892. A detailed analysis of the demography of Okarche is found in my prior work (Prewitt 1979). Comparison of Delaware data to those of an Anglo-American community sheds light on the household structures and generational status of the pioneer Delaware group, and aids in understanding certain specific features of Indian populations associated with frontier settlement.

Figure 2 provides two versions of the age-sex structure of the 1862 Delaware population in Kansas. When the population is considered in one-year cohorts (Figure 2b) strong peaks occur for ages ending in 0 or 5, and secondary peaks are observed for ages 28, 38, and 48. This phenomenon is especially linked to the over-24 population, although the large number of children in the 7-year cohort is also suspicious. Such age averaging is common in Indian census materials of the late 19th century, and can sometimes be a difficult problem working against accurate analysis. But the same data for the Delaware considered in 5-year cohorts (Figure 2a) produce a much smoother age-sex diagram which is comparable to those for populations in which age-averaging techniques of enumeration were not employed. We may therefore accept the age-sex structure of the 1862 Delaware population with reasonable confidence.

The basic characteristics of the population in Figure 2a are consistent with other frontier populations in most respects. The low



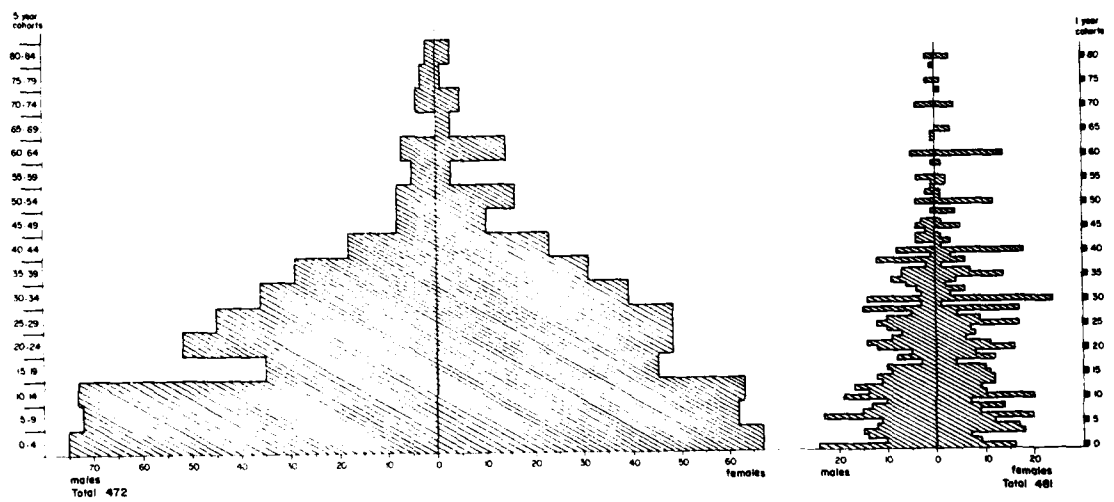


Figure 2. Age-sex profiles of the 1862 Delaware population in Kansas (compiled from a manuscript version of the 1862 Delaware census of the John Gill Pratt Collection, Kansas Historical Society).

number of individuals in the 15-19 cohort reflects a basic frontier pattern. Mobility tends to select for families including mainly parents in the childbearing years and their children, and usually works against elderly people who are unattached to younger households. Yet the Kansas Delawares were a slightly older population overall than Anglo-American frontier populations in other areas. If we compare the 1862 age-sex characteristics with those of the settlers around Okarche in 1889, we see a larger proportion of individuals in their teens. This suggests that the average age of parents and households was greater than in the Okarche population, and that the number of children per household was peaking for the Delaware people involved in the move to Oklahoma.

Other differences between Indian and non-Indian populations are apparent in the age-sex profile of the 1862 Delaware. Generally, frontier populations include higher proportions of adult males than females, and the average women's age tends to be younger than that for men (see Lefferts 1977). The Kansas Delaware included slightly higher proportions of women in each age cohort, and an overall sex ratio of 100.102. This slight balance in favor of women is atypical in the Anglo-American pioneer populations of the Oklahoma settlement era. The Delaware profile shows some of the impact of the difficult times the tribe experienced in its movement out of Indiana through Missouri and finally to Kansas, all accomplished between 1820 and the early 1930's (see Weslanger 1972: 361-72). These difficulties of relocation also account for the rather small number of people over 44 in the 1862 register. The population reflects the attrition of older individuals coupled with reasonably high rates of birth for the young families who became established in Kansas.

The combination of a high birth rate and the loss of many of the elderly people resulted in a relatively stable population size through the period immediately prior to the move to Oklahoma. The 1867 Delaware regis-

ter lists only 985 individuals, a scant difference of 3 from the 1862 enumeration. It is likely that there were considerable balances of births and deaths during the five years between compilation of these census documents, and that factors of in and out migration weighted less heavily on the population totals, although the end of the Civil War did bring the return of some men who were not present in 1862.

The move to Oklahoma produced another period of increased attrition from the Delaware population. Two factors combined to bring about a general reduction of numbers over the first 30 years of Oklahoma settlement. First, the birth rate of the maturing Kansas Delaware community was slowing down. There was a lag of about 15 years before the large 0-14 cohort came to marriageable age and gave a boost to the birthrate. There is no way to assess the infant mortality rate for the period from 1867 through 1898, but the pattern of living children listed as descendants of the immigrant Delaware suggests that there was a radical jump in the birth rate between 1882 and 1887. Second, of the 985 people listed in 1867 only 203 were still alive in 1898. This amounts to an average sustained frequency of deaths of about 25 per year, or a death rate of approximately 35 per 1000 during the settlement era. Actually, this is a low death rate which attests to the general youth of the population as a whole, but in the absence of a comparable birth rate the population dwindled to approximately 700 by 1898.

Figure 3 shows the 1898 Oklahoma Delaware population and compares broad age cohorts for the 1862 and 1898 enumerations. The age-sex pattern has only a slight constriction in the 25-29 cohort, and otherwise displays a pyramid structure typical of post-frontier conditions. The low birth rate of the first 15 years after settlement is reflected in the balance of individuals in the 15-29 cohort of the 1898 diagram (Figure 3b). Indeed, the data suggest that a general increase in birth rate was beginning at the turn of the century,

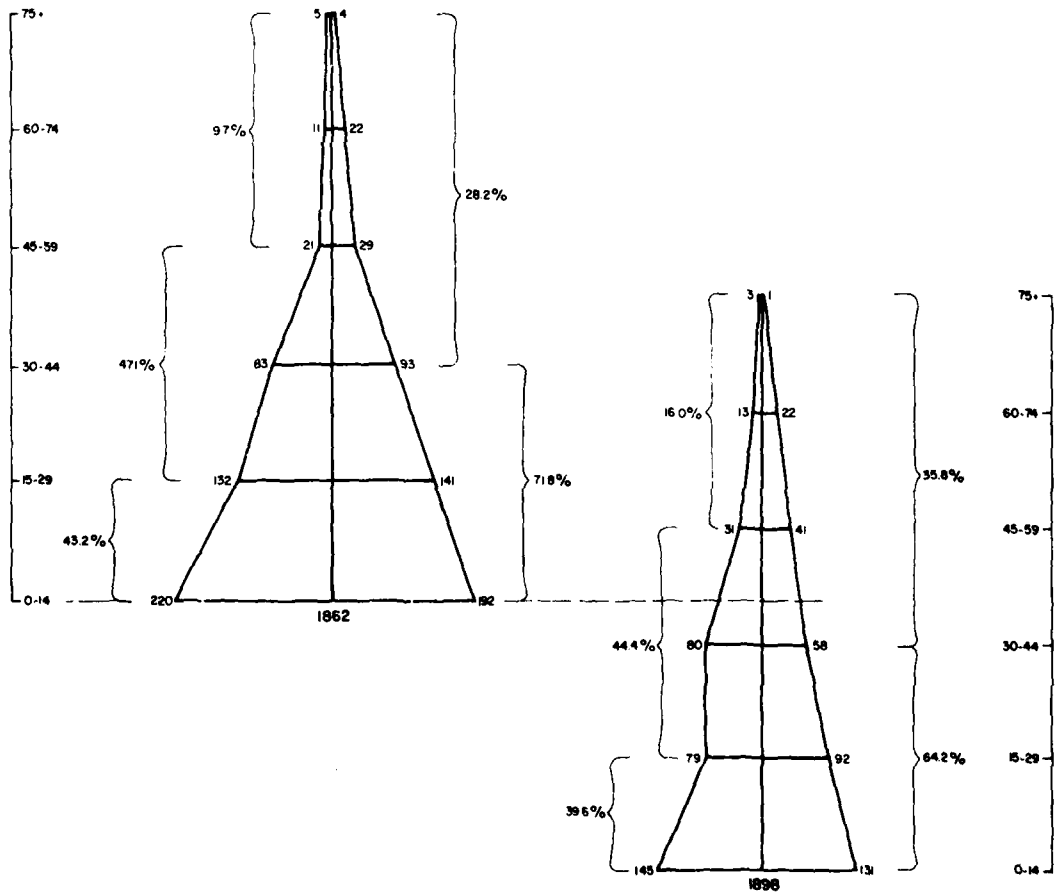
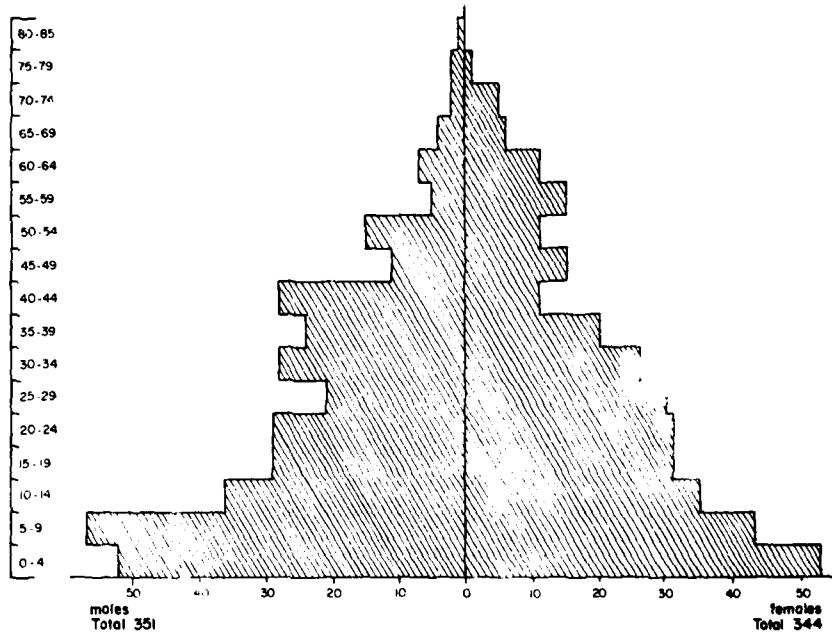


Figure 3. Age-sex profiles of the 1898 Delaware population in northeast Oklahoma and population changes between 1862 and 1898 (Compiled from a typed copy of the 1898 Delaware register in the John G. Pratt Collection, Kansas Historical Society).

continuing the mild boom seen in the 0-15 cohort of the same diagram. The major distinguishing characteristic of the 1862 and 1898 Delaware communities was in the relative proportions of children, adults, and elderly adults. The raw figures for the over-29 cohorts of both populations are comparable, but the numbers of people under 30 are radically different. Because of the differences in population size, percentage comparisons show best the development of the Oklahoma Delaware group. In 1862 only 9.7% of the people were over 44, while 16% of the 1898 population was in the over-44 age span. In contrast, while 43.2% of the 1862 population was under 15, the comparable group in 1898 represented only 39.6% of the total enumeration. It is usual in a developing frontier population for the major productive agespan, from 15 to 59, to increase in size through time. This increase marks a tendency toward population maturity, especially when stable living conditions are established allowing the elderly population to better survive. The Delaware population between 15 and 59 increased from about 52% to slightly over 54% during the first thirty years of Oklahoma settlement. But the more restricted 15-45 portion of this productive sector in the population decreased from 47.1% to 44.4% during the same period.

These figures indicate that the demographic impacts of the move to Oklahoma were perhaps more severe than they might have been on a large group of slightly younger households. The lack of an immediate potential for offsetting deaths with a post-migration period of family building slowed the natural response to the demographic trauma of the move. Thus, it was after 1898 that the Delaware began to increase in numbers again, and then only in the context of many marriages with non-Indians or Indians of other groups. The social constraints against marriage with close relatives today (any person to whom a direct link can be traced), the wide distribution of the population on the

land, and the numerical losses of the settlement era brought the Delaware below a critical size threshold. The people could not maintain demographic identity and recover from the shocks wrought in the actualities of their final resettlement.

The 249 individuals over 29 years old in 1898 include the 203 surviving from the 1867 enumeration and 46 people who were not listed on the 1867 census, those born in 1867 and 1868 after the enumeration and a few spouses listed as heirs in the 1898 tabulation. In addition, the age distribution of men and women is more similar to the frontier pattern seen in the Anglo-American population of Okarche. There is a particular numerical imbalance of the 30-45 cohort of 1898 (a sex ratio of 100:66) which is more pronounced than the similar ratio of the same cohort in 1867 which shows a sex ratio of 100:87. These features of the 1898 population suggest that males include spouses from outside the original group, as well as men from the Delaware populations who moved into Oklahoma from Texas or other areas of the United States not under the authority of the Kansas Indian agents. Overall, the sex balance of the 1898 population shifted to favor men with a ratio of 100:98.

#### **SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS INFLUENCING DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS**

To this point we have considered the broad trends of age-sex structure as they pertain to the frontier context of the Delaware population, and the factors of population size and geographic distribution which limited potentials for maintenance of population integrity throughout the settlement era. A number of specific social and cultural factors also shed light on the demographic circumstances of the 19th Century Delaware. Among these factors are cultural practices surrounding marriage, social identification, and the

development of ties to other Indian groups.

The old marriage system of the Delaware is a matter of considerable debate. Morgan (1959, 1976) provides the earliest information, although even in the 1860's when he was among the Kansas Delaware the task of his social-structural studies mainly involved historical reconstruction. Thurman (1974) identifies the historic-period "clans" as originally constituting endogamous "tribes" and suggests that their differentiating significance had waned by the time of Morgan's work. It is apparent that when the Delaware entered Kansas they still differentiated a number of subdivisions within each of these groups—that is, what are now indicated as the wolf, turkey, and turtle clans. During the entire period of Kansas and Oklahoma association, however, these groups were the only social-unit associations the people continued to trace. Marriage patterns among the Delaware during the period allowed both endogamous and exogamous unions, and memberships in the groups was traced through the mother. Regardless of the level of organization represented by the wolf, turkey, and turtle identifications, they did not regulate marriages during late historic times. This situation coupled with what we know of the prior social units and marriage system of the several groups of Algonquians linked with the term "Delaware" suggests that the Kansas population shifted from a historically based set of proscriptive marriage rules to a more permissive system.

But there are also important changes in marriage patterns that occurred during the period of Kansas and early Oklahoma occupancy, mainly involving the degree to which parents were involved in selecting mates for their children. Many of the Delaware marriages of the 19th Century were "arranged." This system is probably most closely associated with the most culturally conservative of the people, those who still maintained knowledge of the old system of clans. Yet it is also likely that arranged marriages served to guarantee spouses in a population that had been subject to radical imbalances of the sexes

under the hard conditions of migration and war with other Indians and whites. The age-sex distribution of 1898 (Figure 3a) shows a slight imbalance of the sex ratio in the over 54 population, the generations of adult age during the Civil War, although the 1862 census does not show a radical imbalance for the same generations. Nonetheless, there were reasons for parents of both young men and women to enter into such marriage agreements. Plural marriages, for example, were still common in the Kansas Delaware community. Thus, a balanced sex ratio would produce a shortage of marriageable women, especially in a frontier population with small 15-19 cohorts. On the other the history of mobility of Delaware men in raiding activities and other travel on the frontier kept the numbers of men associated with the group trimmed to a consistently low value. Judging from the 1862 census figures, it was probably more important for parents of daughters to attempt an arranged marriage. These unions created social ties, of course, and provided security and continuity of relationship in an uncertain social field.

In Oklahoma the trend for arranged marriages continued, but a number of those marriages failed in the long run. Remarriage to partners selected individually usually followed these divorces, and through time a pattern of individual choice in marriage was established. This occurred in the context of many new social ties, including a close association with the Shawnee and the direct juxtaposition of a large white community in the Cherokee Nation. It is not uncommon in Oklahoma to encounter individuals today who, although they have Indian background, were not raised in the Indian community at all. A pattern of out-marriage to the white community was the end of Delaware association for some people. A similar phenomenon occurred even within the Delaware tribe, since some individuals chose to identify almost totally with the white community after the move to Oklahoma. Thus, those individuals who remain noted in the 1898

Delaware census represent those with social identification as Delaware, for the most part. It is certain that some children and other heirs are simply not listed in the 1898 enumerations.

#### SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The age constraints on marriage, even in the context of multiple remarriages, the disorganization of the Delaware move to Oklahoma (see Weslanger 1972: 428), and the real social differentiation of the Delaware factions combined to limit the cohesiveness of the Oklahoma group as a demographic isolate. The Delaware were neither totally open to taking spouses from the outside, nor politically and geographically unified enough to sustain a secure pattern of marriages within their population. The group for which these factors were most crucial, of course, was the population of traditional orientation. Representing only a fragment of the whole Delaware citizenship in the Cherokee Nation, marriages within the Big House community were sustained only through about the 1890's. Prior relationships quickly brought prohibitions against marrying close relatives into force, and the entire population was thrust into the necessity of marrying outsiders.

The movement of the Delaware into Oklahoma began the final undermining of a demographic integrity that had been maintained through long travels and resettlements in several ecologically distinctive localities. The Delaware had followed the expanding frontier of the United States, staying always on its edge until it arrived in Oklahoma. The small population of 1867 was too diverse and became too geographically dismembered to maintain its unity as a social-demographic unit. The generational pattern of the Oklahoma Delaware consisted of an initial adult settler population, the first generation of settler children commencing marriages mainly in the early 1880's, and a second generation including some Oklahoma-born fullbloods

who, in general, married outside the Delaware tribe. This second generation was raised during the turn of the century and the period of early Oklahoma statehood, and now represents the elder generation of people of Delaware heritage. There are now approximately 4000 people of Delaware background in Oklahoma, but only a handful of individuals with any knowledge of the language and other elements of traditional culture. Indeed, there are but a few fluent speakers of the Lenape language in Oklahoma.

The last frontier experience of these people is not atypical of the smaller Indian groups who came to the Indian Territories. In fact, the individual history of the Delaware is intertwined with the many other histories that might be written, not only of the Indian groups but of settlers of other backgrounds. There is a distinctiveness to the frontier experience brought about by the initial and cumulative relationships of social unity. Indeed, while Germans and Czechs wrought a new unity out of common heritage in Oklahoma towns such as Okarche and Prague, the Indians accomplished a similar transformation. The difference of the cases are in the degree to which new identifications were brought about by choices or necessities, and in the long-term economic and political intergration of the resultant groups in Oklahoma.

## THE ORGANIZATION OF FARMING ON THE INDIAN FRONTIER

It is sometimes difficult to identify with the daily realities of even our recent past. When we speak of agriculture in the 1980's we refer to a vast mechanized industry with large corporate or family landholdings. And yet, the economic organization of this system, its specialized commodities and international relationships, are only a very recent development. The agriculture of the 1890's and early 1900's, as much as it forms the basis for the modern situation, differed tremendously in its scale of operation. Even the basic ecological relationships of the turn of the century were different from those of today. The ecosystem, including its technological components, was more stable in terms of natural balances, but also more unpredictable from the point of view of human controls.

It is even more difficult to appreciate a past farming practice that differs on significant cultural grounds from the farming heritage of contemporary capitalist or collective agriculture. The activity of farming on the Indian frontier entails just such a difference, especially in the period prior to the Civil War but continuing even through the early part of this century. The farming practices of Indian households and communities present a particularly perplexing set of problems to the historian. First, the Indian farmer was operating to some extent within the dominant agricultural trends of the times, so the seasonal routines and technology of the Indian farm were similar to particulars of non-Indian farms. Yet the overall cultural orientations and supporting social organizations of the diverse Indian communities are removed from the mainstream historically, just as they are removed in fundamental ways today. It is fitting to attempt to observe some of the cultural differences and similarities between the Indian and non-Indian horse farm of the Oklahoma frontier. Such a comparison aids us in understanding the contribution of the Indian farmer. It also aids us in understanding

the myth that Indians, especially traditional Indians, were not committed and knowledgeable farmers. And when we see evidence that some Indians indeed did not farm on a regular basis, the comparison may aid us in understanding why.

But there is another reason why we begin this investigation on the basic level of subsistence organization and material aspects of life. Farming serves as a key to the identification of central features of the cultural orientation in the Indian frontier. The annual routine of the farm, the seasonal flux, the social cycle, the sequence of religious observances, and the intricacies of political life seem to offer a coordinated image through which we encounter a world of differences and processes of change. The concerns of survival, however, take priority in this complex of relations. They set the limits against which ideas and strategies old or new are weighed, allowing change or continuity or producing unexpected developments.

There is a hidden dimension of cultural change that derives from the relationship between the set of expectations possessed by a culture, and the actual effects of the culture played out in a particular context. Our science and technology are aimed at reducing this hidden dimension to known relationships and precise statements of cause and effect. All cultures attempt to make precise statements about a known world of events and objects, but not all viable cultures deal in known relationships. Indeed, cultures are operating blind in at least some phenomenal domains from which there is no escape, and so they change. And that change is observed most directly on the most fundamental levels of our existence, sustenance and the things in life that assure sustenance.

Some of the cultural associations of the early Indian pioneers in Washington County, the Cherokee and Delaware peoples, represent traditional practices stemming from the pre-

Colonial period in the east. This is true with regard to issues of crop selection and emphasis, including the reliance upon hunting and gathering as an adjunct activity. It is also true of the more esoteric concerns of religious practice, organization of communities, and features of familial rights or obligations. But there are additional influences which shaped the farming practice and society of these people. The other forces represent indigenous sources of change related to the particular settlement experience in Oklahoma, historical factors originating in the migrations and settlement of several prior frontiers, and finally the resounding technological revolution of the 19th century. Thus, the Indian pioneers carried a tradition which was under constant pressure for revision and reformulation. A practice which was successful in Pennsylvania or Indiana was sometimes ecologically infeasible in Oklahoma, if it had not become technologically obsolete. Demographic factors associated with settlement in Oklahoma sometimes worked against the continuation of long established cultural practices or social relationships. Even the adoption of a simple technological innovation might have far-reaching effects in the larger system, producing new relationships to land, new social ties, and revisions of cherished beliefs or justifications about the place of people in the world.

The sociocultural dynamic takes place generally, just as it took place in Oklahoma, as a series of oscillations or transformations rather than changes. It involves material and symbolic phenomena equally to the extent that it is sometimes difficult to decide "causes" of particular shifts of emphasis. Of course, sometimes causes may be clear. The segmentation of the Kansas Delaware into geographic isolates brought about certain changes in social identification, for example, which finalized factional divisions that had developed prior to moving into Oklahoma. Similarly, the practice of sending young Indian children away to schools undermined the Delaware tradition of sending boys on vision quests, and so also undermined the Big House Religion. At the same time there are many in-

stances in which subtle adjustments of material life to ideologies, or revisions of ideology to fit changing material conditions mark the changes as less "casually" straightforward. In all cases it is possible to see change as occurring through successions of generations, and as I have demonstrated in another context frontier situations present especially clear contexts for the observation of such generational transformations (Prewitt 1979).

It is most important to note, then, that the meaning of such a term as "tradition" may differ greatly from generation to generation, as old ways are reformulated to accommodate new conditions. A new place is made to fit with the extant worldview of the settler much less than it modifies the worldview, even when outward manifestations show little evidence of the modification of cultural practice. Worlds of difference develop between fathers and sons, although both may be traditional in their own time. And at the pace of change in the frontier settlement in the 19th century, and especially in the Native American world, a few years may be sufficient to leave only traces of a fundamental cultural practice, or to transform the social statuses and roles of a people beyond recognition. Such is the case with many groups, Indian and non-Indian, who settled Oklahoma, including especially the Delaware who form the primary concern of this investigation. As we view the organization of farming and the social cycle, then, we view a succession of "worlds" and the basis for understanding the significance of the Big House sites located in the Copan Lake area. Indeed, the daily life of the people deeply altered and influenced the religious practices that bonded traditional Delaware identity during the settlement era and the period of early Oklahoma statehood. The Big House today, like the early farming practices with which we will deal, becomes a positive element of Delaware heritage and the broader heritage of Oklahoma to the extent that it is interpreted in its context of history and from the perspective of the people who carried out its observances.



### LIFE ON THE FARMSTEAD

**Shelter.** There are now few traces of the earliest farmsteads of the Copan Lake area. There are no standing cabins in the impact area of the lake, although one badly deteriorated early 20th century cabin is located on the ridge northwest of the dam location in an area to be developed as a park. This is the Wilson cabin (Figure 4a), associated with one of the prominent traditional Delaware families of the Copan/Dewey region. During the excavation of site 34WN29 a historic cabin site was located and tested. The site relates to the pre-Civil-War occupancy of the region, and was built by Ferdinand Goodman and his wife Catherine Roundtree Goodman, a Cherokee. The site forms part of the basis for the reconstruction of daily life offered here. Numerous log structures were originally built in the region by Cherokee, Osage, and Delaware Indians, as well as white settlers associated with these groups. Most of the cabins were eventually abandoned as more permanent frame structures were completed. Many log structures were converted to use as graneries or storage buildings during the last stages of the settlement era. Two standing cabins are located in areas immediately adjacent to the Lake area. One of these is a single-pen structure located on the south branch of Cotton Creek just east of the lake (Figure 4b). It was probably built somewhat later than the earliest structures of the region, and is reputed to have been built by a man of German background. The other standing cabin is located to the west of the lake area in Osage County on the property of the Mullendore Ranch. It is known as the Labadie Cabin (Figure 4c) since it was the domicile of members of the Labadie family, members of the Osage Tribe. The construction details of the Labadie Cabin are distinctive in that the structure has two stories. Most of the log structures of the region, however, were probably of more modest design and proportions.

The Delaware Big House Churches were log structures of a grand scale (Figure 4d).

They differed from extant living structures in several technical details related to their size. But these buildings also had features of log preparation and joining that probably more closely approximate the techniques used in some of the living structures first built by Delaware in the region. Cabin construction styles differed greatly through time, and some techniques of building had limited geographic distributions depending upon the backgrounds of settler populations. Thus, there is no particular style of cabin construction in the region that can be said to characterize northeast Oklahoma. Cherokee pioneers, it should be remembered, had a Southern association while the Delaware were involved with the building traditions of the north, especially those of Pennsylvania and the Old Northwest. Further, while many elements of log-cabin building are derived from European techniques brought from Germany and other parts of Europe (see Weslager 1969, Jordon 1978), some features relate to indigenous technical practices derived from a long pre-European experience in the eastern Woodlands.

Long timbers are a special requirement of log construction. It is apparent from the proportions of the last Big House Church that some very tall trees were available within the Little Caney Valley into the early part of the 20th century. The apparent size of the Goodman Cabin, 28 by 22 feet, is also suggestive of a more well developed forest cover than today. Of course, the location of trees in pockets similar to those observed today is presumed to apply to the settlement period. The centerpost of the Big House has been identified as wood of *Quercus macrocarpa* (Burr Oak) which may attain a diameter of 5 feet and a height of 80 feet at maturity. Along the constricted valley margins adjacent to the Long Shelter (34WN66; see Henry, 1977), only a few kilometers above the Big House locations, there are still many trees of sufficient size to produce such structures, although they are now probably much reduced in numbers in comparison to the uncut forests

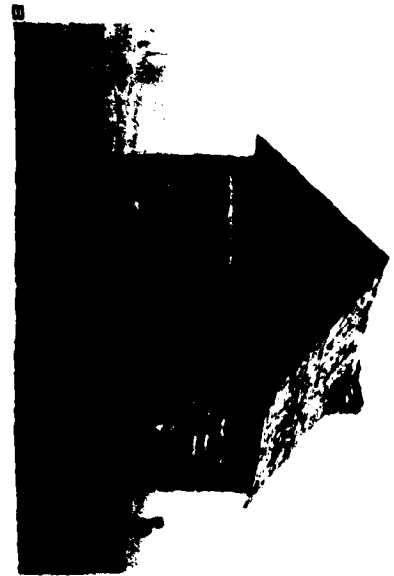


Figure 4. Log Structures in the Copan Lake region. Wilson Cabin (photo by C. A. Westlager, courtesy James Rementer), a; Labadie Cabin, b; German Cabin, c; the last Big House Church (photo courtesy James Rementer), d.

of the mid-19th century.

The three standing cabins noted above and the pictures of the Big House Church used through the early 1920's show differences in the dressing and joining of logs. Both the Labadie Cabin and the German Cabin show rough-hewn square timbers joined with full dovetailing. The Wilson Cabin has rounded logs with double-notched overlapping corner joints. While no close views of the Big House corners are available for study, the picture of Figure 4d suggests that a similar construction technique was used. Both of the Delaware structures have log extensions projecting past the corner, while the other two cabins have trimmed corners. The Labadie Cabin is indeed neatly squared on the corners, and some logs show complex dovetailing features. Vertical planking on the gable ends of the Big House and the Labadie Cabin stand in contrast to the horizontal log placement of the German Cabin. The Wilson Cabin had a secondary roof of tin and a well sealed floor during its final stages of use. The other structures all show original cedar shake roofing. No artificial flooring was put in the Big House, but the illustrated living structures all display plank flooring. Archaeological evidence from the Goodman Cabin suggests that the structure also had some sort of flooring, as well as an appended shed similar to the one on the German structure. The placement of the shed at the Goodman place, however, was probably on the north gable and rather than on an eve side of the cabin. There are several distinctive features of the Big House, which will be taken up in the discussion of the religious observances of the Delaware.

The log cabin was replaced by much more elaborate frame structures, ranging from simple rectangular prairie houses (Figure 9b) to two-story homes such as the two shown in Figure 5. The Fouts home (Figure 5b), now in the possession of the McCartlin family, is located at "three mile corner" north of Dewey, Oklahoma. This residence is extremely important to the traditional Delaware

community, since it was the location of numerous social and religious observances during the early part of this century. Indeed, in 1945 a brief attempt at reestablishment of the Big House religion was carried out at the place. The old smoke house (Figure 5a) is located immediately adjacent to the house on the north, and represents a second generation of structures on the property with the main house. The earlier structures at the place were used for storage and finally dismantled. The home of Lizzie Thompson Whiteturkey is shown in a period photograph (Figure 5c) illustrating the detail of many elaborate features originally built into the early Delaware homes of the region. Associated with the early frame houses were more substantial barns and other outbuildings. The barn shown in Figure 5d was moved from its original location in the Copan Lake area to a site 3 miles north of the town of Copan in 1971.

The layout of the pioneer farm shows a sequential organization and reorganization. Figure 6 depicts the kind of farmstead growth characteristic of those homesteads that were successful and continued in the hands of a single family. The plan is that of the place worked by James Henry Thompson and Sarah Wilson Thompson, members of the traditional Delaware community and followers of the Big House religion. The original shelter for the Thompsons in 1891 was a log structure. Near the log house they then built a two-story home similar to those illustrated above, a smoke house, barn, and other outbuildings and animal areas. The site was also used for observances of both Little Moon and Big Moon ceremonies of the Native American Church. Most farmsteads of the region did not have these distinctive religious places, although certain other individuals of the Delaware community participated in the Native American Church and kept places devoted to the ceremonies.

The Thompsons raised hogs and grew substantial acreages of corn and other grains. Their situation is not atypical of the tradi-

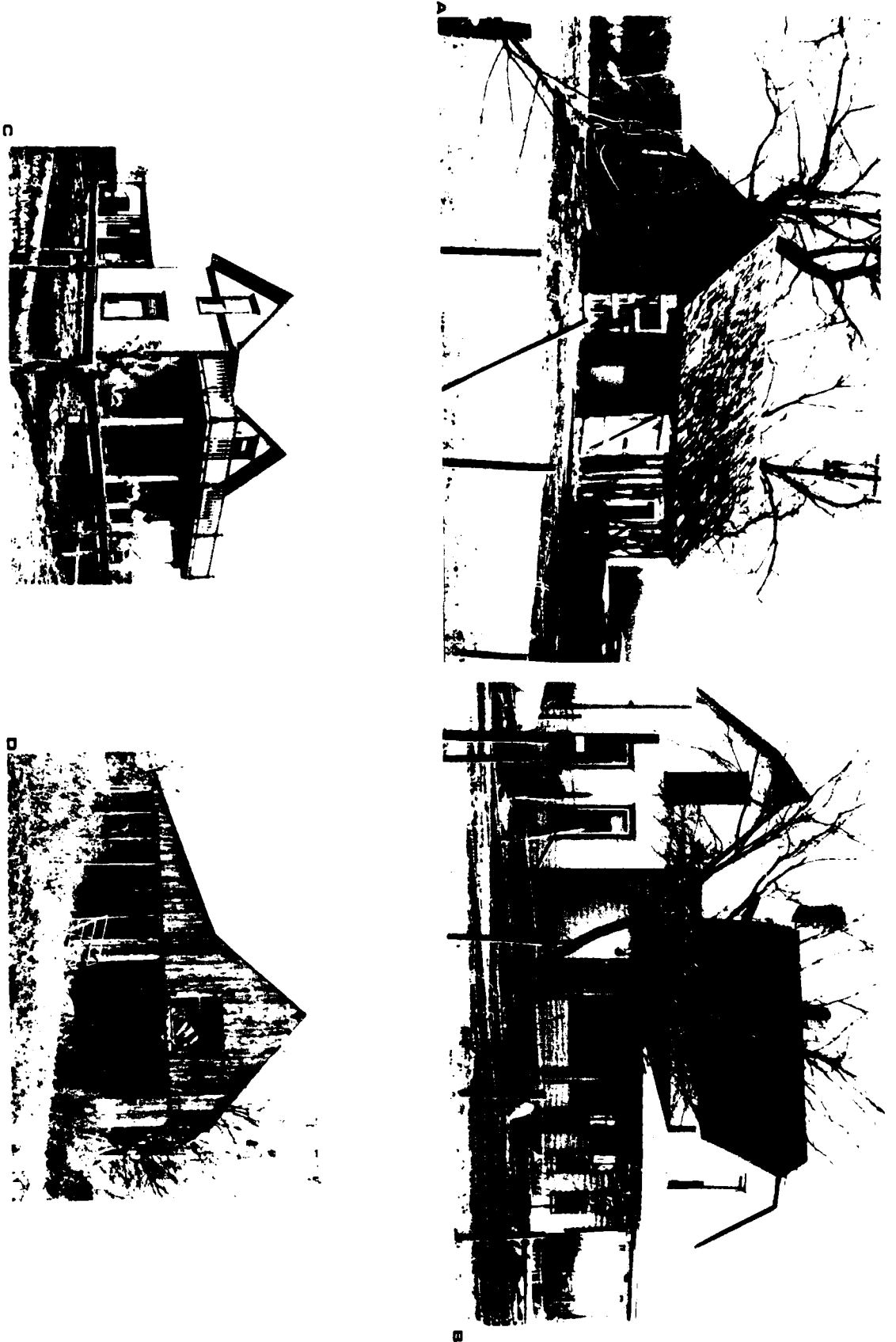


Figure 5. Early frame structures associated with the Delaware population of the Big House community and the Copan Lake region. Fouts smoke house and home, a and b; Lizzie Thompson Whiteturkey home (photo courtesy Glen McCartlin), c; early small barn originally in the Little Caney bottoms area, d.

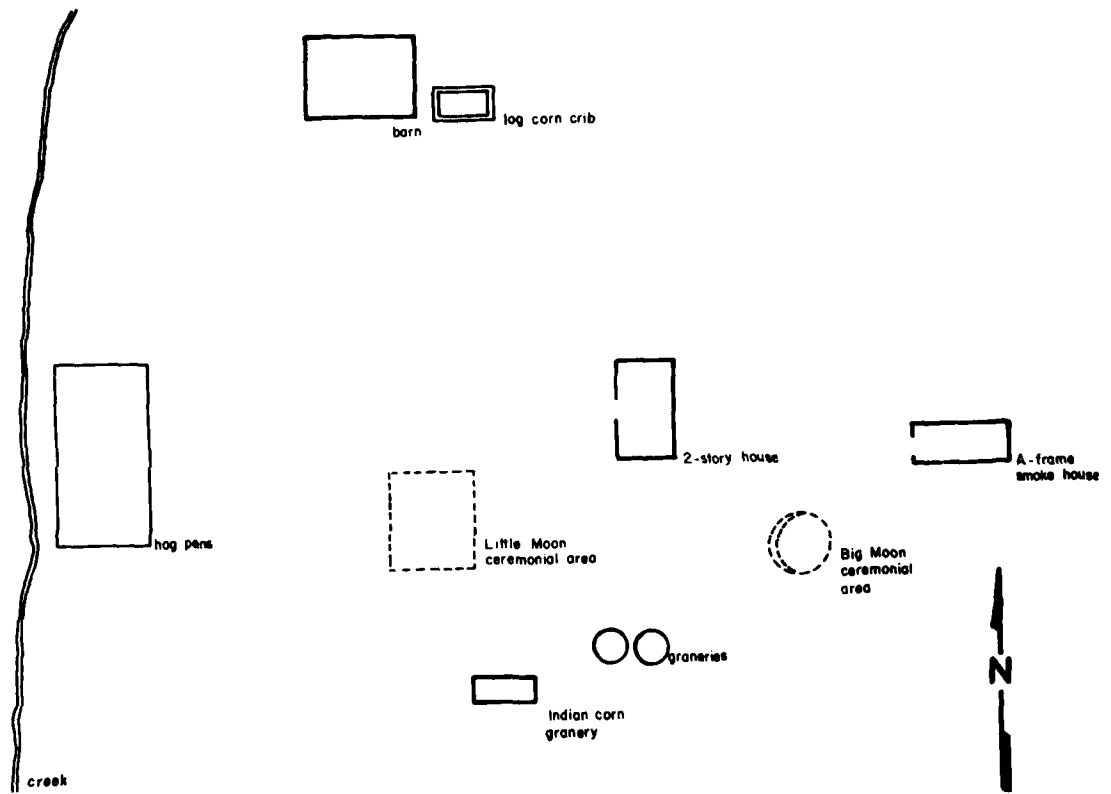


Figure 6. Plan of the farm of James Henry Thompson and Sarah Wilson Thompson, 1891-1940.

tional Delaware, however, especially those of the generation of children born to the original adult Delaware settlers. Nor is their use of the cabin divergent from patterns of habitation for the young families of the 1890's, certainly the cabin habitation was much more of a temporary arrangement than it had been for the settlers of the immediate post-Civil War era.

**Food Resources and Agricultural Products.** The four major habitats of the Copan Lake region provided a wide variety of plant and animal resources to the pioneer generation. The Bluestem Prairies were broken by vegetation of the Cross Timbers forests to the south and west of the Lake area, and there were stands of Oak-Hickory forest and Ash-Cottonwood forests in the Little Caney Valley and along its major tributaries. Numerous plants from all of the habitats contributed to the dietary and medical needs of the settlers. George Hill (1971) provided a preliminary ethnobotany for the Delaware covering medicinal plants, foodplants, and ceremonial plants. I have reorganized his data in tabular form (Tables 1-4) for reference here, relating the material to the major plant associations of the four zones noted above. Hill's work is augmented here by reference to Weslager (1973), Tantaquidgeon (1972), Miller (1975), Dean (1979, 1980) and my own notes. Delaware plant diet during the settlement era can be presumed to have been more broadly augmented by wild foods than the listings here indicate. These materials represent the most important foods, however, among those readily available in the region.

The wild plants most significant in the Delaware diet included onions (*Allium*) of two varieties, water lily (*Nymphaea*) roots and pod nuts, Indian potato (*Apios Americana*), common lambsquarter (*Chenopodium album*), dandelion (*Taraxarum officinale*), and milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). Lambsquarter was fried or used with Poke greens in salads. There is only one edible variety of milkweed which is cut in the early stages of its growth and boiled with dumplings. Paw-

paw fruit (*Asimina triloba*) and black haw nuts (*Viburnum prunifolium*), pecans (*Carya illinoensis*), persimmon (*Diospyro virginiana*), and black walnut (*Juglans nigra*) were also collected for food. A variety of berries can be added to the list: wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), raspberry (*Rubas occidentalis*), blackberry (*Rubas allegheniensis*), dewberry (*Rubas flagellaris*), and wild grape (*Vitis sp.*). Wild grape was used in making "Grape dumping," a very special sweet dish of the region.

The availability of these foods was highly seasonal. In early spring (April) lambsquarter and water lily roots were right for collection, followed in May by milkweed and dandelion. The collection period for dandelion extended into the summer, while the collection of milkweed was cut shorter by the development of the plant. By June the milkweed goes to seed and is not as tender as the early sprouts. However, in June harvests of "buffalo peas" were made. The summer months brought the various berries into appropriate stages for collection. Beginning in October, depending upon the timing of the first hard frosts, persimmons, paw-paw, pecans, black haw, and black walnut all became available. In addition, the wild grapes were ripe in the fall during October or early November. By late November the main collections that were made involved the nut group, continuing through December or January.

The wide variety of plants used as medicines (Table 2) represents only a partial list. Readers interested in more detailed treatment of Delaware plant cures should consult Weslager (1973) and Tantaquidgeon (1972). It is important to note that for some individuals a considerable investment of time was committed to the collection and preparation of these plants either for immediate cures or for constant and future use.

Hill lists a number of other plants used in ceremonial contexts and in daily life (Tables 3 and 4). It is apparent from the listings given here that the Delaware had considerable knowledge of the plant resources of their region, based in well developed uses

Table 1. Plant Foods

COMMON NAME	Taxon	Lenape Name	Uses
Onion	<i>Allium</i> sp.	ulépən "onion" [pl.]	Two varieties eaten
Water Lily	<i>Nymphaea</i> sp.	biʌnʌkwɪn "water acorn"	Roots and pod nuts eaten
Indian Potato	<i>Glycine apios</i>	hakialaipan "dirt potato"	Tuber eaten
Common Lambsquarter	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	Kanésa	Fried with grease and used as greens
Dandelion	<i>Taraxarum officinale</i>		Greens
Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	pitúkəna [pl.] "those which grow double"	Greens
Edible Morel	<i>Morchella</i>	ahkókwe "mushroom"	
Oak Gails	fungus on <i>Quercus</i> species	papáktis	Outside shell is eaten by children
Paw-Paw	<i>Asimina triloba</i>	mahčikpi	Fruit eaten
Black Haw	<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	sakwənákanim "Black haw fruit"	Red nuts eaten in fall
Maize	<i>Zea Mays</i>	xáskwim "corn"	Several varieties of corn used in basic food preparations
Sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i>	xaxakw "tree"	Chips of heartwood boiled to make a tea
Pecans	<i>Carya illinoensis</i>	káčəm	Nuts eaten in fall
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	túkwm "round fruit"	Nuts eaten in fall
Persimmon	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	ximina	Fruit eaten
Berries	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i> ,	tékim "heart berry"	Collected and eaten in season
	<i>Rubus occidentalis</i> ,	EkókolLs	
	<i>R. allegheniensis</i> ,	hmuingwsak [pl.]	
Wild Grape	<i>R. flagellaris</i>		Used in making "Grape Dump-ling"
	<i>Vitis</i> sp.	wisahkim "bitter fruit"	

Table 2. Medicines

COMMON NAME	Taxon	Lenape Name	Uses
Watermelon	<i>Citrullus vulgaris</i>	Eskitámig "that which is eaten raw"	Boiled seed tea used for kidney trouble
Corn Silk	<i>Zea mays</i>	mLixukon (sing) "that which is hair-like"	Corn silk tea used for kidney trouble
Oats	<i>Avena sativa</i>	ots (English loan-word)	Boiled oats tea taken to make measles erupt and reduce fever
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	ásikemesí	Yarrow root tea used to stop excessive menstrual flow
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	nEnEskakw	Bark tea used to stop excessive menstrual flow
Wild Grape	<i>Vitis sp.</i>	wisahkim "bitter fruit"	Given to babies if mother does not have milk
Black Haw	<i>Viburnum rufidulum</i>	sakwenákanim	Bark tea taken for stomach cramps
Common Sumac	<i>Rhus glabra</i>	Kaləkənik anək w "something that is held in the hand"	Root chewed for toothache or mouth sores; root tea used as a gargle
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	puhwésənək "something pithy"	Flower tea given to newborn babies as a tonic
Sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i>	wínakw	Tea taken to "thin the blood" (reduce high blood pressure)
Peach	<i>Prunus persica</i>	pilkešakw (Ger. Pfirsich + "akw" for tree)	Peach and mulberry leaves used to induce vomiting
Butler Willow	<i>Salix sp.</i>	nusemakw	Cure for pyorrhea; tea used to induce vomiting
Horsement, Indian Perfume	<i>Mentha arucosis</i>	wLngimákwska "sweet smelling grass"	Compress for headache
Black Walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i>	túkwiw "round fruit"	Leaves boiled for ringworm wash



Table 2. Medicines (continued)

COMMON NAME	Taxon	Lenape Name	Uses
Black Thorny Locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	piteláís "double thorn"	Bark boiled to make tea for colds
Jimson Weed	<i>Datura</i>	lakwanatáck	Burn treatment with leaves
Prickly Pear	<i>Opuntia</i> sp.	mahtáksen	Compress of leaves for boils
Wild Strawberry	<i>Fragaria virginiana</i>	téhim "heart fruit"	Leaves applied to face for improvement of the complexion
Joe-Pye-Weed	<i>Eupatorium purpureum</i>	hatusákan	Leaves applied to face for improvement of the complexion
Cottonwood	<i>Populu deltoides</i>	xaxakw	Bark boiled for use as liniment
Persimmon	<i>Diospyro virginiana</i>	ximin	Sap placed in the ear for earache
Southern Red Oak	<i>Quercus falcata</i>	wisahkakw "bitter tree"	Boiled wood chips used as an astringent for bowel trouble, and for sore throat
Slippery Elm	<i>Ulmus fulva</i>	xkwikpi	Drink from soaked strips of bark used to relieve chills
Wild Black Cherry	<i>Prunus scrotina</i>	mwtámfí	Boiled bark tea used for coughs and colds
Common Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>		Prepared to make cough syrup
Red Oak	<i>Quercus borealis</i> <i>Q. falcata</i>	wisahkakw "bitter tree"	"Red oak water" used for hoarseness, especially by singers; used in the Big House ceremonies by singers
Black Oak	<i>Quercus velutina</i>	páhkamákw "tree that one pounds"	Preparation for stopping hemorrhage
SPURGE, CARPET SPURGE	<i>Euphorbia humistrata</i>	šipenáskikw "spread out grass"	Stem juice applied to warts
Wild Indigo	<i>Baptisia tinertoria</i>	ehamxing "that which blows over and over"	Internal stomach ache cure

Table 3. Religious Plants

COMMON NAME	Taxon	Lenape Name	Uses
Eastern Red Cedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	pəpʰəkʷLs	Purifying incense used in several ceremonial contexts and after attending a funeral; cedar smoke cleansing is used in naming ceremonies
Wild Sage	<i>Salvia greggi</i>	Wipungskikw "gray grass"	Purifying agent important in the Peyote religion
Peyote	<i>Lophophora williamsii</i>	bisun "medicine" (Generic term for medicine)	Taken in a number of forms during the ceremonies of the peyote religion
Mescal Bean	<i>Sophora secundiflora</i>		Formerly used in the "Red Bean Cult" observances; now worn on bandoliers by "Straight" war dancers
Redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	nɛnɛskakw	Sacred fire wood in the Peyote ceremony
Blackjack Oak	<i>Quercus marilandica</i>	wɛwɔ̃ɛlitúnas	Cigarette papers in the Peyote ceremony
Cornhusks	<i>Zea mays</i>	opsko "white husks" opəskw [pl.] [sing]	Cigarette papers in the Peyote ceremony
Indian Perfume	<i>Mentha arvensis</i>	wLɛgimakwsko "sweet-smelling grass"	Crushed leaves are tied into a scarf attached to the bandoliers of "Straight" war dancers and sometimes worn by peyotists.
Tobacco	<i>Nicotiana</i> sp.	ʰsatai (also "our grandfather") muxomes	Smoked in a number of ritual contexts
	<i>Nicotiana rustica</i>	lɛni kwʰsatai	Original eastern tobacco

Table 4. Plants used in common p...

COMMON NAME	Taxon	Lenape Name	Uses
Cardinal Flower	Lobelia cardinalis	matapipalingo "that which is never overlooked"	Used as a love charm
Dodder	Cuscuta	"love grass"	Used as a test of lover's affection
Compass Plant	Silphium laciniatum	pkuwakw "gum plant"	Chewing gum
Wild Grape	Vitis sp.	wisáhkim "bitter fruit"	Scalp and hair treatment carried out in early Spring
Elderberry	Sambucus canadensis	páhwésanek	Berries used to make dye for baskets
Pokeberry	Phytolacca americana	čak'ngwem	Tonic given to chickens made from roots
Slippery Elm	Ulmus fulva	xkwilpi	Bark used to sweeten and preserve fat; inner bark used to repair baskets
Hickory	Carya hickori	t'pán'nsi "bitter nut tree"	Used in basketry and for binding material
Black Oak	Quercus velutina		Used to make black dye
Black Walnut	Juglans nigra	túk'wim "round fruit"	Used to make black dye
Ash	Fraxinus sp.	mixákanakw	Used in making bows
Dogwood	Cornus sp.	tuwčalakw	Used in making arrows
Buckbrush	Symphoricarpos	č'khikanakw "broom tree"	Broom materials
Elm	Ulmus sp.	Lokanéhúsi	Strips of bark used to hobble horses
Gourds	Cucurbita sp.	xkanákhak xkanákhako "bone bottles"	Used to make water bottles, dippers, bird houses, scarf slides, whistles, and dance rattles
Coconut	Cocas nucifera		Used in recent times to make rattles
Corn Cobs	Zea mays	mitkək	Used to make a "witch bird" hung over a baby's crib
Slump Water		č'č'ankpi	Water in hollow stumps was used to wash the face to prevent pimples
Buckeye	Aesculus sp.		Used in the moccasin game
Wild Black Cherry	Prunus serotina	mwiw'nsi	Used to make dye
Mulberry	Morus rubra	okhatim	Used for framework for bark huts
Bog Grass		sikwanak	Used for making jackstraws game (salaxtik n)
Coffee Bean	Gymnocladus canadensis	olaman	Used in the moccasin game Face paint

known to them from their prior eastern locations. Some of the plants, however, were obtained through trade or trips out of the region, and relate the Delaware squarely within larger regional patterns of plant use foreign to the Atlantic coast associations of the people. Thus, the significance of such plants as peyote (*Lophophora williamsii*), wild sage (*Salvia greggii*), mescal bean (*Sophora secundiflora*), and coconut (*Cocos nucifera*) is in the information they provide on culture change and religious reorientation of the late-19th and early-20th century Delaware community.

But by far the most significant plants from the perspective of subsistence were the products of agriculture, and of these, corn was the paramount crop. The Delaware called it *Kahḡsəna*, a form of address meaning "our mother," and so the plant held a place in a cosmology including earth, fire, water, the sun and moon, the four directions, the thunder beings, and *Kiḡseləmúkən*—"he who created us by his thoughts." The generic name for corn was *xəskwim*, although several specific names were applied to varieties. The most important variety was *puhwḡm* (white flour corn), but blue corn (*sḡhsapsin*), sweet corn (*pisim*), and "white man corn" (*ḡawanahkwim*) were also grown.

There were numerous corn preparations that formed major parts of the diet. Hominy (*səteo*) was prepared with shelled kernels which were placed in a large pot of boiling water prepared with clean ashes. The preparation was stirred with a large paddle (*wihamx-kikan*) until the kernels turned an orange color similar to that of a crayfish. The kernels were then removed with a dipper into a basket. The preparer would shake the basket under running water until the kernels were white, being careful not to lose grains. After this processing the kernels were placed in cotton bags and hung up to drip dry in the sun. The bags were turned occasionally to even the sun exposure. When the kernels would "rattle" in the bag, they were ready for pounding in a wooden mortar (*kahókən*).

Pounding produced coarse and fine fractions which were separated for inclusion in different dishes. The fine part was used for bread (*lən-ahpon*) and the coarse part was cooked into a gruel (*sápan*) with meat, with or without either salt or sugar. The *lənahpon* was made by pouring boiling water into the flour to produce a batter. This was then poured into a Dutch oven to be cooked, sometimes with the addition of currents or beans. The bread could be eaten as cooked, or sliced and browned in a skillet.

Another preparation involved taking milk-stage corn (*mḡlingwḡm*) and grating the tops of the soft kernels from the cob. The cobs were then scraped to obtain the soft inner materials from the remaining attached parts. The juicy gratings were immediately stirred and baked. The resultant bread (*mḡlingweahpon*) was then crumbled and dried on pans, sometimes for as much as two days. The rule of thumb was the same as that for hominy; the bread was ready for storage when it would "rattle." When the dried product (*kahapon*) was mixed in boiling water it would swell to about twice its size. Boiled *kahapon* was seasoned with bacon grease or could be added to any number of boiled dishes.

Milk stage corn was also sometimes roasted. A shallow coal bed was prepared in the corn field, usually in a small rectangular area of perhaps 2 by 5 feet. A short fence around the coal bed supported husked corn left on the stalks so they could be leaned over the fire. The corn was turned periodically to assure even roasting. After the kernels were well roasted they were cooled and then pried off the cobs with a knife. They could then be placed in bags similar to those used for hominy and allowed to undergo additional drying. After drying the kernels were stored for later use in meat dishes. This kind of corn preparation was called *təsemənəna*.

Beans (*malaxkwḡta*) in several varieties were also grown, as well as pumpkins, wheat and oats. Pumpkins (*kḡskunhakw*) were cut into rings which were then strung on a line and dried in the sun. The dried rings could

then be stored. These were later cut into pieces and boiled to be eaten like squash or made into pies. Garden crops included early plants such as peas and potatoes, a standard Spring planting of green vegetables, and a Fall garden of mustard, radishes, and turnips. These crop selections, as well as orchard crop such as peaches, became more characteristic of Indian farms after the settlement era. But the emphasis of corn, beans, and pumpkins on the Delaware farms of the early part of the 20th century stands in contrast to some of the non-Indian farms of the region. At least some of the non-Indian farmers placed more emphasis on wheat (see Haystead and Fite 1955: 179-203) in the Little Caney Valley district in Oklahoma, like the Kansas farmers located immediately to the north and the homesteaders located to the west of the Cross Timbers zone in the Unassigned Lands and Cheyenne-Arapaho districts (cf. Prewitt 1979: 82-107). Cattle and oil production in the region also differentiated some of the non-Indian entrepreneurs in the 1890's. This gave some of the smaller Indian farms a rustic look to the outsider, making it easy to presume that little or no economically valuable activity was carried on by the Indian households.

Animal husbandry and hunting also both figured prominently in the life of the settler population and later settled farmers of the Indian community. Of course, hunting was more important early in the settlement period and waned as human population became more concentrated and animal populations were reduced. Deer were plentiful in Little Caney Valley through the late 1800's, but populations were very small during the early part of this century. Game management in the region has brought about a renewal of the deer population since the period of the Second World War. Faunal remains from the Goodman Cabin site illustrate the significance of deer, rabbit, and other game to the pioneer diet. Ducks and geese were hunted during the Fall for use as food and to acquire feathers for pillows. Game and songbirds, as well as a few birds of prey were also hunted for feathers. Quail

feathers were used in pillows, and wild turkey was an important and abundant game bird throughout the forested region of eastern Oklahoma. Turkey wing brooms were used in the Big House ceremonies.

Hogs were prominent on the farms of the region, especially on the Indian farms. These animals fit well with the crop emphasis of the Indians and the general scale of farming in Oklahoma in the late-19th century. Beef cattle were also sometimes kept in small numbers by Indian families, but dairy products were not emphasized in the diet. This is in part because of the large number of adults in the population who were lactase deficient—a condition which makes it extremely difficult to digest milk products (see Reid 1976:36). Chickens, ducks and geese were also maintained on Indian farms. Cattle were pastured on wheat in the late Fall and fed over the Winter, so not many animals were kept by any particular family. Much of the winter meat provisioning was accomplished through the slaughtering of hogs, supplemented with venison or beef. Beef was more important after the turn of the century, but was as likely commercially obtained as it was produced on the individual farmstead. Indeed, beef replaced venison in meat distributions of the Big House after 1900, but was bought for the occasion in many instances.

Delaware slaughtering techniques did not differ greatly from non-Indian practices, although body parts and specific foods produced had generic Delaware terms which form rough equivalents to English terms. The process involved stunning or killing the animal with a rifle by placing a shot in the head. The hog was immediately bled by thrusting a knife into the neck. A tilted barrel set in the ground next to a low platform was used to wash the animal in water kept hot by rocks that had been heated in a fire. After washing the animal was hoisted by a pulley to a position over the platform, its hind legs spread and secured with a gambrel stick to which the pulley rope was tied. Hair was scraped off with a corn knife or machete. Incisions were made around

the anus and the skin was inverted and tied to close that aperture. A long deep incision could then be made from the anus to the neck, and the head was cut off. Internal organs were placed in a clean wash tub and turned over to the women who prepared edible portions including the intestines. The gutted and cleaned hog was then cut into shoulders, hams, sides, and ribs. The meat was salted by cutting incisions into the pieces and rubbing salt over each portion, being careful to get salt into the incisions. Meat was hung in a smokehouse over a well-controlled fire for a day, and then stored in the smokehouse until use.

Processing of the internal organs involved removing useless parts, such as the pancreas from the intestines and gall-bladder from the liver. The basic organs were then washed and put into the smoke house. The heart was opened for cleaning. Special processing for the intestines and stomach involved cutting lengths, washing and turning each length inside out. These parts were placed in the smoke house after a thorough cleaning. Feet were cleaned and the hoof parts removed. Pig's feet were cooked with hominy.

Ducks (*kwikwingamuk*) and geese (*mæ-lək*) were plucked and the feathers saved. They were then scraped and washed with boiling water and dressed to cook whole by roasting or boiling. After boiling the birds were browned in an oven. The hair of squirrels was singed off with an outside fire. The animals were then washed well and all of the black stubble was removed. The heads were removed and the bodies gutted, cut into pieces, and boiled in a pot. Water from the boiling process was poured off (squirrel soup). Squirrels were also boiled whole in salty water and then hung in a shady area to air. This took away the "animal" taste. Heads were fed to the dogs. Rabbits were skinned, cleaned, and cut up and boiled in a manner similar to squirrels.

Fat from hogs was also used to make soap. Fat from the flanks of the animals was cut into one-inch cubes and put in a vat. This was heated and stirred to render grease which was strained off. The remaining meat ("crak-

lins") was reserved. A liquid lye was prepared with ash and water, into which the craklins were placed. They were cooked for an hour or more and then poured into a pan and allowed to cool. The resultant soap could then be cut into squares. For soft soap the solution was not boiled as long.

Lean meat (*laneyok*) of beef or venison was cut into strips about 1 ½ feet long and 1 inch square. These were then hung over a smoke fire on a horizontally set pole to produce dried meat (*pxašikana*). Other special meats included pork tongue and brains. The tongue was peeled and boiled, then baked and sliced. Brains were fried with eggs.

**Farm Work and Household Crafts.** As with all farming families, virtually the entire household was integrated into the work routine. Throughout the seasonal flow of the year men accomplished most of the heavy work of field preparation and maintenance. Women tended to the maintenance of the garden and specialized tasks supportive of the harvest. Figure 7 displays the yearly cycle, including gathering and hunting work, production of utilitarian items, and important points in the social cycle. The illustration displays the sexual division of labor and shows the seasonal periods defined by particular events such as the Big House ceremonies, special dances, and the production stages of farming activity. We see that the Winter provided opportunity for much of the craft work done by women, while men's chores were divided between crafts and heavy maintenance activities. During the Spring and Summer the primary tasks of men and women were less coordinated into single elements of production. However, during the Fall women and men worked in complementary activities of harvest and Winter food preparation.

The four-horse team (Figure 8c) was maintained in the northeast Oklahoma farming area to a much greater extent than in adjacent areas of Kansas, northwest Oklahoma, and southwest Missouri (see Haystead and Fite 1955: 154). At the same time, hay cutting was a farming emphasis of the region that



Figure 7. Yearly farming and social cycle of the Delaware pioneer farmers during the period of settlement through the early 20th century.



Figure 8. Delaware farmers in Washington County during the early 20th century. James Henry Thompson, ca. 1945, a; Charley Dean and James Buffalo, ca. 1945, b; Joe Johnson, John Arnold and Tom Halfmoon, ca. 1915, c (all photos courtesy Nora Thompson Dean).



paralleled the intense hay production of eastern Kansas and the northern Plains (Haystead and Fite 1955: 191). Such teams were not only used in farming, but they were set to tasks in the early oilfield operations of Washington County and adjacent areas. This is in part attributable to the maintenance of relatively small farms in the region, many well under 160 acres, as opposed to the 400 and 500 acre farms that developed rapidly in the wheat belt. The main efficiency of the tractor in its early years was based upon low fuel costs and the release of farmed land committed to animal feeds for expanded wheat production (see Prewitt 1979: 90). The context for such specialized crop emphasis was lacking in the Indian farming areas where land holdings remained small and such crop specialization held less promise. It is important to note that the allotment of lands to the Cherokee Nation occurred about 35 years after the first Delaware homesteads had been established in Washington County. This brought about a direct division of many well-developed family farms, and set the first generation of Oklahoma Delaware children in the position of starting fresh, if at all, in building a working arrangement on the land. This is precisely the opposite of conditions in the wheat belt, where the settler generation was able to consolidate new holdings and establish large farms for division among children or continued maintenance by selected children (see Prewitt 1979: 138-147).

Thus, the scale of farming practice among the Indians of Washington County allowed a more gradual transition from the "horse farm" period to mechanized farming. And the political decisions for allotment had direct economic impacts on the agricultural development of the region. Most specifically, it took the land base for development out of the hands of the Indians. At the same time, geographic, social and cultural factors supported the continuation of the small-scale diversified farming and gardening among the Delaware. Royalties for oil on Indian lands provided temporary boosts to income, although the suddenness of the income change and the administration of the royalties payments made

this benefit less significant to the long-term wealth of many families than it might have been. Further, the Delaware of Dewey and Copan represented the most traditional group of the immediate region in their practice of religious observances, maintenance of the Lenape language, and participation in the developing larger culture of the region. They were more similar to the Osage in this respect than they were to the Cherokee with whom they were legally associated. And the traditional way of life involved social obligations and cultural practices that fit better with small scale farming than with the special emphasis of certain crops or other business pursuits.

An important aspect of the traditional Delaware community was the continuation of craft work beyond the period of settlement. The traditional winter crafts—carving, leather work, bead and ribbon work and the making of clothing for both everyday and social use—continued well into this century in many families. The crafts continue to this day among a few traditional households. Traditional clothing augmented (and augments) the wardrobe of the community in spite of the fact that changes in dress toward non-Indian standards were seen throughout the settlement era. The turn of the century marks the most dramatic shift in the emphasis of crafts. At that time production of ceremonial or special clothing dominated the winter production routine, as commercially made everyday wear became more available and cash income was increased in most households. Eventually, the Winter association of crafts was lost, and only a few households maintained year-round involvement in the traditional arts.

Throughout the first quarter of this century, however, women's dress among the Delaware of Copan and Dewey reflected the traditions of the 1800's. Most older women maintained everyday dress in styles of the traditional culture. A long skirt with a full apron (*nikanixtakan*) was the most distinctive characteristic of this everyday style, usually with a traditional blouse and neckerchief (Figure 9a-c). Of course, both older and younger women wore the contemporary styles

of the day. High-top shoes with buttons were worn in place of moccasins, and fancy dresses appear in many pictures of the era (Figure 9d). Pictures of the young from the period immediately prior to World War I show a more complete adoption of non-Indian dress in both everyday and formal contexts (Figure 10).

At the same time, special dress was maintained for social and ceremonial contexts (Figure 11). Women's clothing has been described in detail by Tyrone Stewart (1973) while men's clothing has been treated by James Howard (1976). The basic elements of the woman's costume included a blouse (*tak-hwēmbes*) with a shoulder yoke, a wrap around skirt (*təpētun*) decorated with a panel of ribbon work around the bottom and running up the overlapping end on the individual's right side, leggings (*kakúna*), moccasins (*lən-háksəna*) decorated with bead work on the toe and ribbon work on the flaps, and a large brooch (*kəlákhun*) fastening the neck of the blouse. To these were added additional small silver brooches (*anixkamána*) around the yoke of the blouse, beads (*māsápiá*) or a neckerchief (*ahkontəpi*) at the neck, a silver semi-circular comb, (*čixamókən*) worn on the back of the head, and a hairbow (*ānsiptəkən*) with a long ribbon trailer (see Figure 12). Married adult women wore their hair in a "bag wig" while young women wore their hair long with side braids connected to form a single braid in the back tied with a string or ribbon. The young woman's style was called *ansipalaon*. Additionally, a shawl (Figure 13d) was sometimes worn around the shoulders running under the yoke of the blouse.

Men's dress included a breechcloth (*sakutəkən*) and shirt (*lən-wahēmbes*), a beaded belt (*kəlamapísun*), a large beaded bandolier and baf (*asuwilunghu-sānsápiá*), armbands of silver (*təlamangánin*), leggings (*kakúna*) and moccasins (*lən-háksəna*). A choker necklace (*əhukwengānsápiá*) of beads and a neckerchief were also worn. Shoulder feathers were attached to the beaded bandolier, and kneebands (*kəlix-kənəpiá*) or deerhoof leg rattles (*suhwikánsa*)

were tied around the legs just below the knee. Men also wore a roach (*psikalú*) on the top of the head (Figure 11c; Figure 13a, b) and one or two scalp feathers (*mansápiahasu psikaon*), and in early times a blanket was worn in various fashions about the waist and shoulders. The Delaware man in Figure 13a is wearing dress in the style of the Osage illustrating some common and similar features of the dress of the two groups. This should be compared to Figure 13b and c, illustrating the complete outfitting of the adult Delaware men, and the basic components of dress on a young boy.

Outfitting individuals in traditional clothing represented a considerable investment of both time and money. Today, by way of comparison, it costs from \$1200 to \$1500 to complete a straight dancer's costume, not including the labor. A woman's traditional outfit is not quite so expensive, but it still entails a major commitment of resources and time. In former years, when both beadwork and ribbonwork were much more widely practiced and represented the major contribution to the overall appearance of traditional dress, the time spent by women in the preparation of clothing for the large traditional population was a significant portion of the total work of the yearly cycle. Men also spent much time in craft work associated with their specialized clothing, both in bone carving and in preparing and acquiring raw materials. Added to all of these labors were the daily chores of the farm, the production of other utilitarian items, and the production of clothing for daily use. Utilitarian crafts in wood, basketry production, and tanning all were especially important work from the settlement era through the early 1900's.

**Technology and World View.** These brief pictorial and written notes serve to underscore the stark contrasts of life between the generation of the earliest Indian pioneers in the region, both Cherokee and Delaware, and the generation of their children. Life in a cabin was very different from that of the more-settled farmstead. There was a broader range of absolute subsistence commitments for the



Figure 9. Delaware women's everyday dress of the settlement era. George T. Anderson and Isabel McCoontz Anderson, ca. 1900, a; Grandma Anderson and Grandma Brown, ca. 1900, b; "the only one" ca. 1880, c; Nora Thompson Dean.

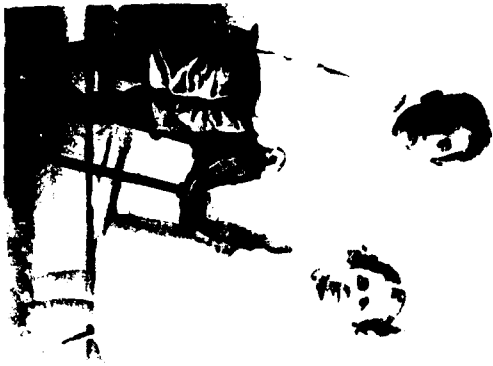


Figure 10.  
 Young Delaware in the early 20th century. Lucy and Ruth Parks, ca. 1910 (photo courtesy Glenn McCartin), a; Anna Anderson Davis, Josephine Buffalo Poyser, and Catherine Curleyhead Berry, ca. 1910, b; Leonard and Nora Thompson, ca. 1912, c; Catherine Curleyhead (center) and Josephine Curleyhead (right), ca. 1910, d (b-d courtesy Nora Thompson Dean). Note goal posts for Indian football game in b; the game was played during the early Spring among the Shawnee and Delaware, and still forms part of the social calendar of the Shawnee.



Figure 11. Traditional women's dress and ceremonial dress of the Delaware community. Grandma Falleaf-Jackson, ca. 1890, a; Sarah Wilson Thompson, 1932, b; John Anderson and Susie Elkhair (Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation photograph taken by M. R. Harrington, 1908), c; Catherine Curleyhead, ca. 1912, d (all photos courtesy Nora Thompson Dean).

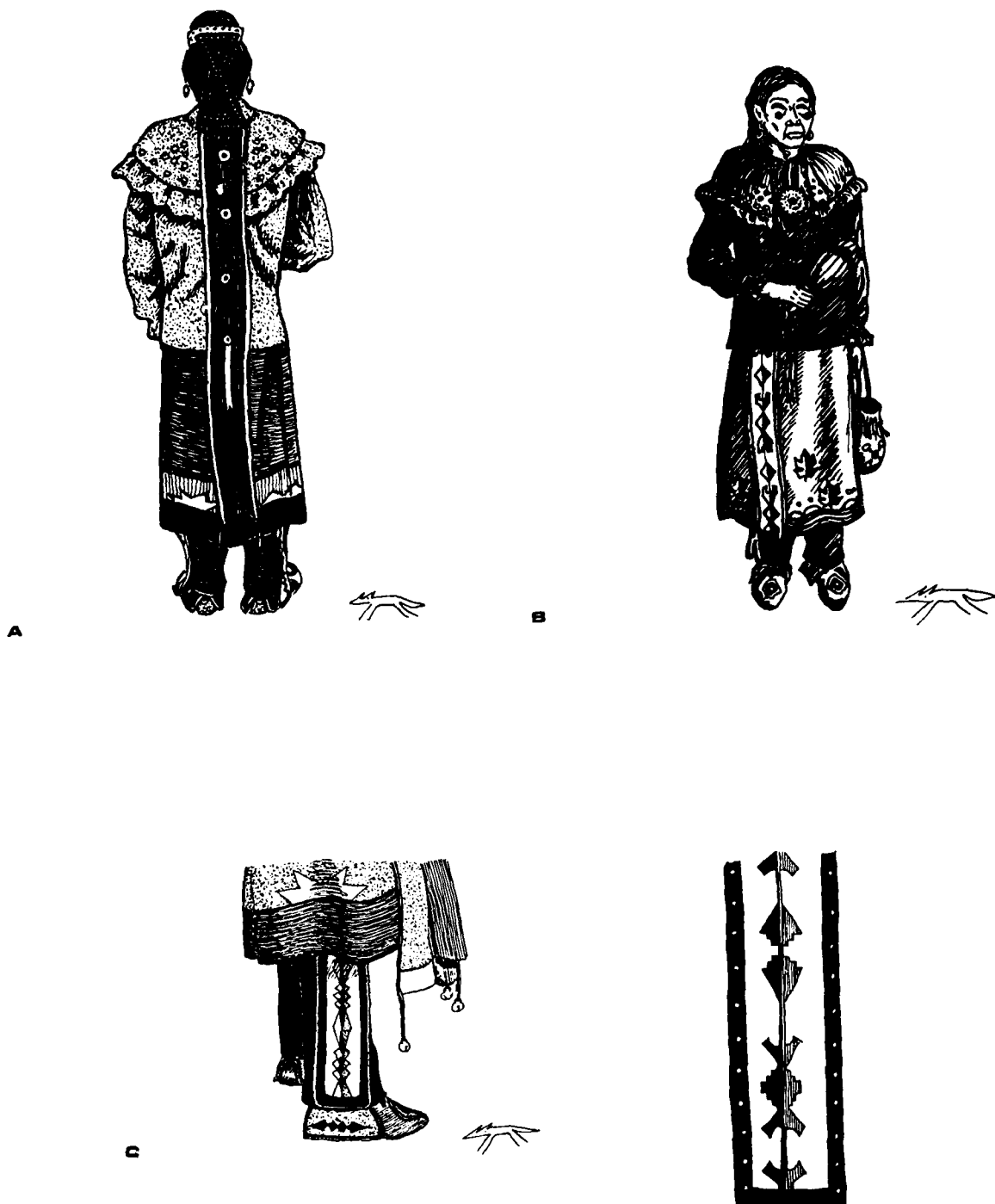


Figure 12. Detail of Traditional Delaware women's ceremonial dress (drawings of the late Brice Vaughn, now in the possession of Nora Thompson Dean).



Figure 13. Late Traditional ceremonial dress among the Delaware. Tom Halfmoon dressed in Osage style, ca. 1920, a; George T. Anderson and Charlie Webber, 1932 (photo courtesy James Howard), b; Louis Bullit, ca. 1900, c; an unidentified Anadarko Delaware woman, ca. 1880, d (a,c and d courtesy Nora Thompson Dean).

pioneer population than for their children, and the reliance upon home products over items obtained commercially was far greater in the earliest years of settlement. The opening of Indian Territory to non-Indian settlement brought adjustments in land, and concomitant adjustments in the work schedule, production of utilitarian items, diet, and general health conditions of the population. These changes are further associated with general changes in the balances of the ecosystem that had been encountered by the original pioneers. The initial conditions of settlement were rapidly altered by a concentration of population, a generation of clearing and hunting, and the introduction of railroad and oil industries prior to allotment of lands of the Five Civilized Tribes. By 1900 noncitizens in Indian Territory outnumbered Indians four to one in a population of about 350,000 (see McReynolds, 1964: 310-312). The allotment simply formalized the existing conditions at the turn of the century. While conditions of the allotment provided some security for the Indians and granted them citizenship in the United States, many families lost substantial land holdings and the autonomy of the various tribes was severely undermined. Thus, the distinction between the pioneer generation and their children is more than simply a technological difference. It is also distinctive in political association and social identification, for the cultures that had formerly been relatively isolated from the broad developments of the nation's expansion were suddenly emerged in those developments. A central-place structure grew on top of the existing places and geographic connections and modified or replaced them. And most of all, the continuation of former practices became a minority activity which was neither well understood nor readily accepted by the new wave of residents. The cultural crisis was reacted to variously by the Indians of the time, and a revolution of social worlds occurred which is still felt today.



## OBSERVANCES OF THE OKLAHOMA BIG HOUSE COMMUNITY

The last active Delaware Big House church (*xingwikáon*) was located in the Little Caney Valley on the margin of the Copan Lake area. It was placed about one-quarter mile north of an earlier Big House, the one observed by M. R. Harrington early in this century (Harrington 1921). The people who carried out the services of the *xingwikáon* through the early 1920's had been young men and women at the time of initial settlement or were born after settlement in Oklahoma. They gained their experience in the conduct of the 12-day observances by growing up in the earlier church established by their parents. The remembrances of several contemporary elders of the Dewey Delaware population (Jones n.d.) include statements that suggest that there may have been a hiatus between the operation of the two churches (see especially the account of Anna Anderson Davis). However, most of the references refer to the considerable planning and repairs of the structure that were always carried out in the days preceding the ceremonies. Yet it is certain that the construction of the last Big House was a major community undertaking which occurred somewhere around 1910 to 1914. Nora Thompson Dean suggests that the construction was as early as perhaps 1909, and this is consistent with the recollections reported in Jones (n.d.). M. R. Harrington's Delaware fieldwork accomplished during the period from 1907 and 1910 produced pictures of the early structure dating to 1908, suggesting a similar date for the construction of the last *xingwikáon*.

Most of the recorded details of construction of the two structures are identical, although some of the finishing touches of the buildings differed in minor ways. Both of the churches were large log buildings with dirt floors (Figures 4d and 14). The major support elements for the roof consisted of A-patterned internal endposts holding a single large pole running the length of the roof (Figure 14). Additional structural support was provided by a center post. Side logs were supported by

three sets of posts placed internally and externally on each side. Thus, on the interior walls there were ten wall posts, two on each end and three on each side of the structure. There was a door on each end of the east-West oriented building, and fire locations between the center post and each of the doors on the midline of the structure. Above each of the fires there was a large smokehole in the roof. No permanent chinking was applied to the wall logs, although mud chinking was applied before the ceremonies each year (Jones n.k.: 37). The wall logs were rough hewn and set before the ceremonies each year (Jones n.d.: 37). The wall logs were rough hewn and set with overlapping double-notched corners. Above the level of the door the gable ends of the house had vertical planking, on the last *xingwikáon* from a height of about 6 feet to perhaps 15 feet at the crest of the roof.

On each of the interior wall posts was carved a face representing the *mesingw*, "spirit of the game animals" (Figure 15a). The faces observed the ceremonies of the people, and were also represented on the east and west sides of the centerpost. All of the faces were painted red on the left half and black on the right (as viewed by an observer), and they received an application of red paint on the cheek of the black part of the face during the observances of the purification night of the ceremonies. Miller (1979) and others (Jones n.d.; Speck 1931) have suggested various symbolic significance for the colors, including associations of the red with life and black with death, or alternatively with female (red) and Male (black) logical associations with widespread correlates in other aspects of categorization in Delaware culture. Red paint was also applied to the left cheek of each participant in the ceremonies on the same evening during which the painting of the *mesingw* occurred. Similar paint is used today as part of dance dress and at burial among traditional Delaware people.

The *mesingw* was only one spirit among a large number of beings recognized in Dela-



Figure 14. Painting of the interior of the Big House by Jake Parks (photo courtesy James Rementer).

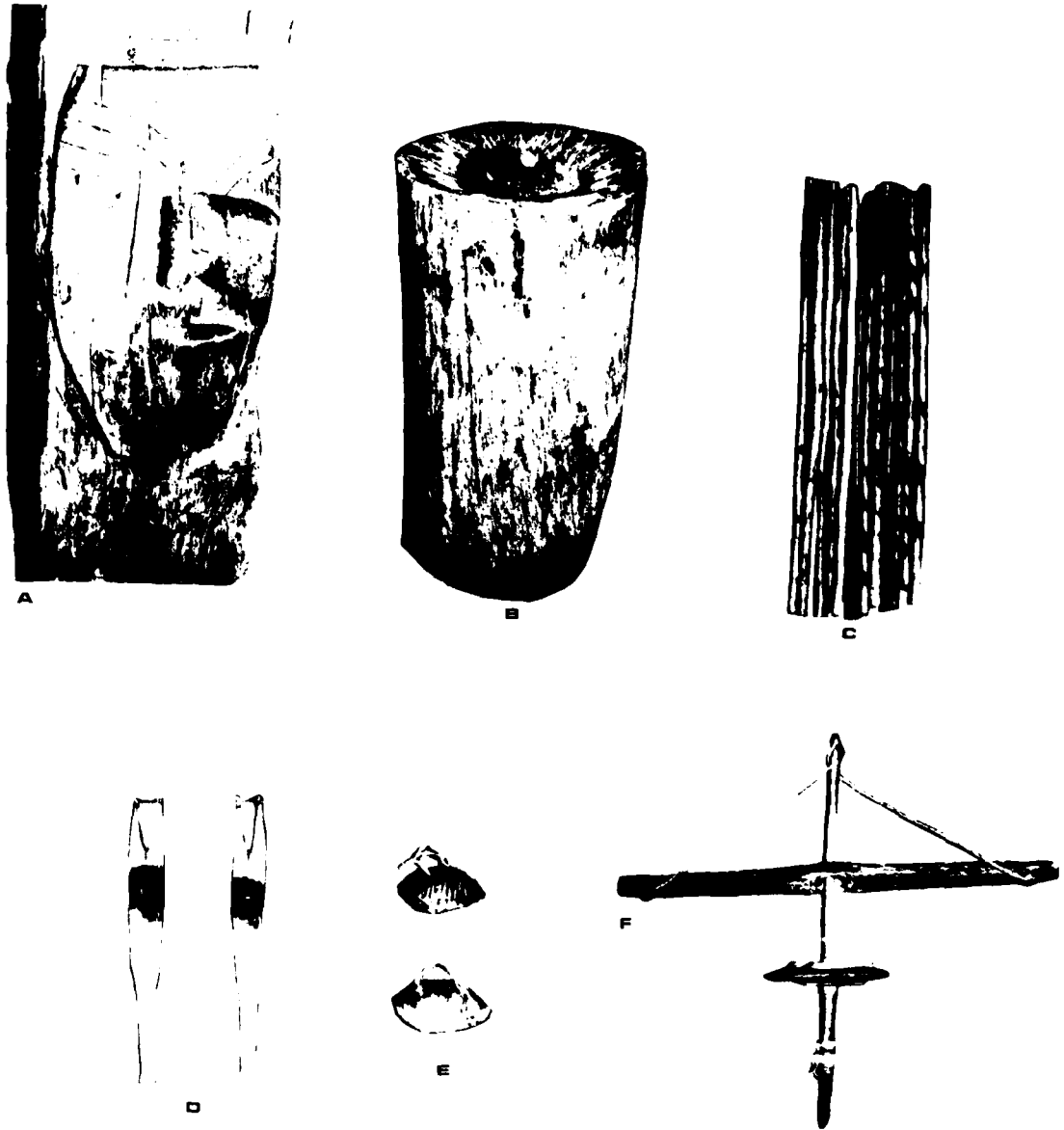


Figure 15. Big House Equipment. mąsingw representation on one side of the centerpost, last Big House, a; kahókʷn used outside east door of Big House, b; prayersticks, c; special drumsticks introduced on the 9th night of the ceremonies, d; turtle-shell rattles used in the vision recitations, e; firedrill used in the last Big House, f (all of these artifacts are in the collections of the Philbrook Museum, Tulsa, Oklahoma, permission for author's photographs courtesy of the Philbrook Museum).

ware cosmology. Paramount among the forces of the universe is *kišlamúkən*, "he who created everything with his thoughts" or the Creator, to whom the ceremonies of the Big House were directed. The Creator resides in the twelfth level of heaven, and the prayers of people reached successive levels in the heavens as the ceremonies progressed through their twelve days. Other spirits reside on different heavenly levels or on earth, and the most important ones are addressed with kinship terms. A summary of the spirit forces their kinship associations with the people, and the phenomena with which each is linked is provided in Table 5. The listings of the table are augmented by Miller (1975), and could include male and female family dance dolls on the grandparental generation.

The characteristics of the diverse spirit forces are varied. The grandfather in the north is considered to be easily angered. For example, if people dance in the winter or if they break the icicles he uses for a came, he sends winter storms. The directional spirits are never encountered in person, although they are thought to have human form. At the naming ceremony and on other occasions these spirits are offered water and tobacco. The thunderers are also offered tobacco and deer-tail hair is burned when they approach so they will not harm anyone. These beings are winged people who are distinguished as young and old depending upon whether their sound is a sharp cracking or a low rumble.

*Məsingw* lives in the forests and rides the deer on occasion. He figured prominently in the daytime activities of the Big House observances, especially in the earlier practice of the settler era. An impersonator of the *məsingw* (*məsinghəlīkən*) would appear periodically in the camp and on occasion participate in a dance associated with hunting in the Big House. He was offered tobacco by the people he encountered, especially children who maintained an interested wonder mixed with fear in his presence (see comments in Jones n.d.). The association of the term *məsingw* with the faces on the posts in the bighouse may indi-

cate that the earthbound spirit was formerly considered one of many similar beings occupying the different heavenly realms (see Michaelson 1912:1). The thunderers are today thought of as sky keepers, and in the earlier works of Harrington and Speck prayers are said to have been carried to the Creator by the spirits of the intermediate levels of heaven. It is probable that the *məsingw* representations in the Big House are related to sky keepers in the old religion, although I can obtain no contemporary verification of this notion. Earlier work is unclear in its celestial associations of the faces, and also in the kinship terms applied to the various spirit forces (cf. Speck 1931, Harrington 1921). Miller (n.d. a) arrives at essentially the same point with regard to the *məsingw* representations and has included the *məsingw* among the grandfathers (Miller, 1975).

The Big House itself joins consideration of the directional spirits in its orientation, with the juxtaposition of the earth and sky (Miller, n.d. a treats these relations in detail). The clean fires of the structure and the prominent use of corn preparations during the twelve days of the ceremony involve other spirit forces directly in the observances. Opening prayers in the bighouse gave direct thanks to the Creator for all of the spirit forces and general provisions of the earth.

These references and symbolic associations affirm the significance of all of the Spirit beings to the early religious context of Delaware life, and provide historical background for many current practices among traditional Lenape people.

**The Big House Ceremonies.** Several earlier treatments of the Big House ceremonies are published (Harrington 1921; Speck 1931; Adams 1890; McCracken 1956; Miller and Dean 1976). Manuscripts on aspects of the Big House ceremonies and cultural context have been prepared by Jones (n.d.) and Miller (n.d. a and b). Jones' materials are transcripts of interviews with several elders among the Delaware of northeast Oklahoma, and include much important historical information on the

Table 5. Lenape Spirit Forces and associations of kinship and habitation realms.

MALE		FEMALE	
	muksamanak "our grandfathers"		nuhmanak "our grandmothers"
	pehahkweyuk (pl.) "the thunderers"		
<hr/>			
	Lawentu "comet"		
	kaoxan "cyclone"		Yawnaxawes "Old Lady South"
	wchenjipang "spirit person of the east"		
	ehaliwskakw (wskakw) "spirit person of the west"		
	Iuwamantu "spirit person of the north"		
<hr/>			
	kuxana "our father"		kahesanank "our mothers"
	kislemukcyg "he who created us with his thoughts"		
<hr/>			
	naξans "older brother, possessive"		naxms "older sister, possessive"
	naxsamas "younger brother, possessive"		
	kiξux "sun" (Older)	SKY DWELLERS	
	ansikayεsuk "Prides" "seven little boys" (Younger)	diskewani kiξux "moon"	
<hr/>			
	nitsamak "my friends" (male speaker)	EARTH DWELLERS	nidsak "my friends" (female speaker)
trees and plant medicines			trees and plant medicines

last Big House community. Miller's work develops broader cultural context for the Big House religion, and reflects on basic Delaware culture from the perspective of anthropological structuralism.

Earlier published work on the Big House is quite variable in its content and orientation. Adams (1890) and McCracken (1956) offer materials of only limited utility from either a historical or cultural perspective. Harrington's book (1921) relied on primary information from persons connected with the pre-1908 observances as leaders, visionaries, singers, and helpers in the actual ceremonies. It is by far the best resource for the practice of Big House religion during the settlement era. Speck's publication (1931) represents an account of the operation of the Big House religion given in the Lenape language by Mr. Charles Webber who, although he was familiar with the religion, was not a primary participant in one of its major roles. Nora Thompson Dean's account of the Big House rite (Miller and Dean 1976) is based upon her understandings of the religion through direct experience between about 1910 and 1924, and thus represents the best material relating to Big House practices during the period of early Oklahoma statehood. Thus, Mrs. Dean's account is of much greater utility than the account given to Speck by his primary informant, especially when used in association with the information of Harrington. The Speck materials simply do not separate many historical elements of the early religious practice from those observances that were extant after the construction of the last Big House church. There are, however, many similarities in the accounts of Mrs. Dean and all other sources as to the basic operation of the ceremonies.

One additional resource on the Big House is a manuscript description of the ceremonies given to Truman Michelson (1912) by Chief Elkhair through an interpreter. This manuscript places many elements of the services on different nights than are indicated in the published accounts. It is clear that Harrington's overall information, in part gained from the

same informant, led him to diverge from the Michelson document. Nonetheless, certain details on the hunting activities associated with the Big House are given in the Elkhair narrative that enable elaboration of our understandings of the settlement era religious practices. Therefore, I have used information from the document in the discussion of the pre-1908 rites.

The following reconstruction of the Big House ceremonies is based primarily upon the information of Harrington, Miller and Dean, and additional work with Nora Thompson Dean and Lucy Parks Blalock on aspects of the practice not covered in earlier accounts. It is the purpose of this analysis to concentrate on elements of change in the practice of the Big House religion between the settlement era and the period after Harrington's fieldwork.

Table 6 shows the primary elements of activity in the Big House ceremonies as represented in the accounts of Harrington, Miller and Dean, and Speck. The basic ceremonies lasted for twelve consecutive nights in October. The rites progressed through several stages of "transformation" building toward a final culmination on the morning after the 12th night of observances. All of the accounts refer to activities of the first, second, third, and fourth days, and so on, so that the conclusion of the ceremony (*tamahama*) is sometimes said to occur on the 13th morning. As will be seen below, it is possible also to conceive of the ceremonies as lasting for twelve "days" running from sunset to sunset, so activities attributed to the "fourth" day, for example are counted as belonging in the third period of night-through-day, and the closing ceremony is associated directly with the end of the twelfth day of the rites (see Figure 18). For comparative purposes I have left the initial accounts in the forms in which they were originally reported.

The most fundamental activity of the Big House religion was the "vision" or experience recitation (*wenijikanéi*). This consisted of a recitation of narrative form of an experience through which spirit forces had given



guidance or promised support to an individual man. The experiences were gained in childhood when boys were sent alone into the uninhabited countryside, but the role of "vision song man" (*wanjikanéit*) was taken up only by elders, or in exceptional cases by adult men who were beginning to take on elder status. Only those men who had obtained experiences as children could participate in this role, and public opinion about the initial *wanjikanéi* attempts often determined whether an individual was accepted as a true person of vision. The vision men delivered their songs on every night of the ceremony.

Women's vision songs were confined to the twelfth night of the ceremonies, and were not carried out in the same manner as the men's recitations. Like the men, women who offered vision songs in the Big House were special people of the older generations, although they obtained visions "naturally" rather than through vision quest. The recitations of women (*ahtehumwi*) were also accompanied by special preparations and the most formal dress of the rites. It was said that the women's night participants dressed well. The painting of the Big House ceremonies of Jake Parks (Figure 14) shows some of the traditional dress worn during the *wanjikanéi*. Similar dress characteristics of the ceremonies are shown in the paintings of Earnest Spybuck illustrated by Harrington. Presumably the fancy dress confined to the end of the post-1908 observances was more prominent on other nights during earlier historic periods.

Other roles important to the services were those of the *askasak* (pl.), or "helpers," who came from the adult population. There were six *askasak*, three men and three women representing pairs from each of the three clans of the Oklahoma Delaware community, each specially selected for the year's observances. In late years certain individuals served often in this capacity. The helpers performed work associated with the hunt in the old days, including preparation of food for the hunters on their first day out and preparation of the deer returned in the succeeding few days. They also prepared corn dishes for uses as-

sociated with the ceremonies, pounding hominy in a large wooden mortar (*kahókan*) and cooking *sápan* and other foods on the outside fire in the front of the east door of the *xingwikaon*. In the evenings, the *askasak* performed a number of chores directly contributive to the ceremonies, including waking people who accidentally fell asleep.

Two *telekaokw* (pl.) very roughly glossed as "singers," sat at a drum on the south side of the church and sang each of the vision men during the appropriate parts of their recitations. The term *teleka* is linked with the term for "goose" (*malok*) because of an "echo" effect the men produced when singing along with a vision man. The special skills involved with being a good singer limited the number of men who performed in this role, in addition to the fact that there were a great many vision songs with which a singer had to be at least familiar. The two prominent singers of the post-1908 period were Jake Parks (*mEtjipahkúxwe* "he who walks when the leaves are worn out") and Willie Longbone (*pwEtthEk-kamən*, "he pushes, moves, kicks, or rolls something this way"). A young singer might learn by working with an older man, just as singing is taught today among many Oklahoma groups, but only established singers could take on the role of *teleka*.

Presiding over the entire service was the leader or "enterer" (*temikEt*), aided by the headman of the hosting clan at least in the post-1908 services. In the final years of the Big House this headman was Chief Charlie Elkhair (*kokwəlupuxwe*, "he walks backwards") who was the acknowledged leader of the Traditional Delaware of the region. Elkhair was presumably of the "round paws" (*tukwsit*) or wolf clan although I have been unable to confirm his precise clan association with certainty. The latest persons to take on the role of *temikEt* were Ben Hill and Frank Wilson (*pEmataekamən*, "things bloom where he steps"), both of *tukwsit* association.

In all of the accounts the ceremonies are said to have begun at dusk of the first day with a speech and prayers to the Creator, followed by a succession of vision songs. The order of



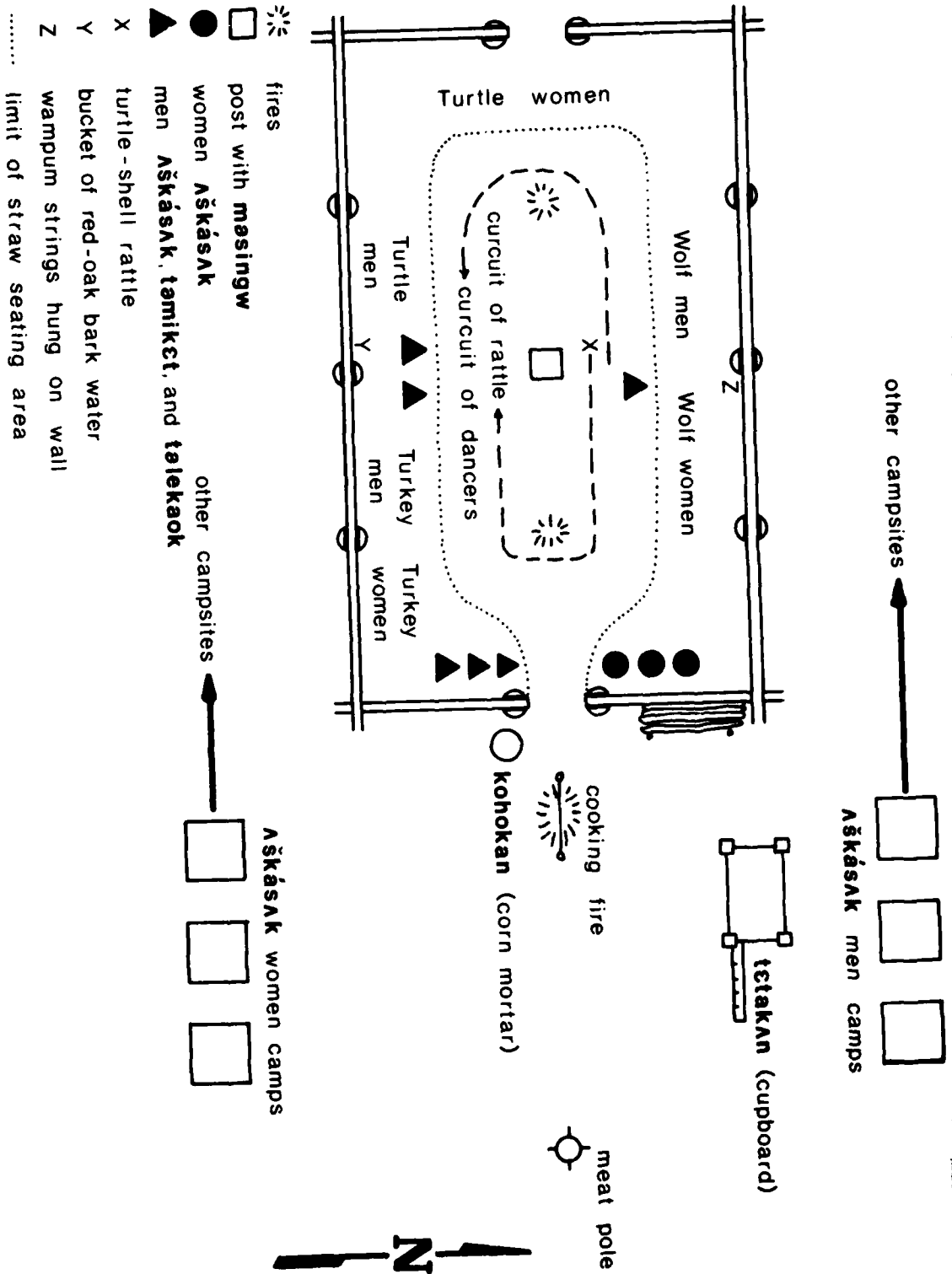


Figure 16. Plan of the Big House and exterior camp locations.

men's vision recitation variations

women's vision recitation

a. wanjikane'i pattern

b. wanjikane'i pattern

c. ahte'bumwi pattern

△ male

○ female

R recitation point during dance

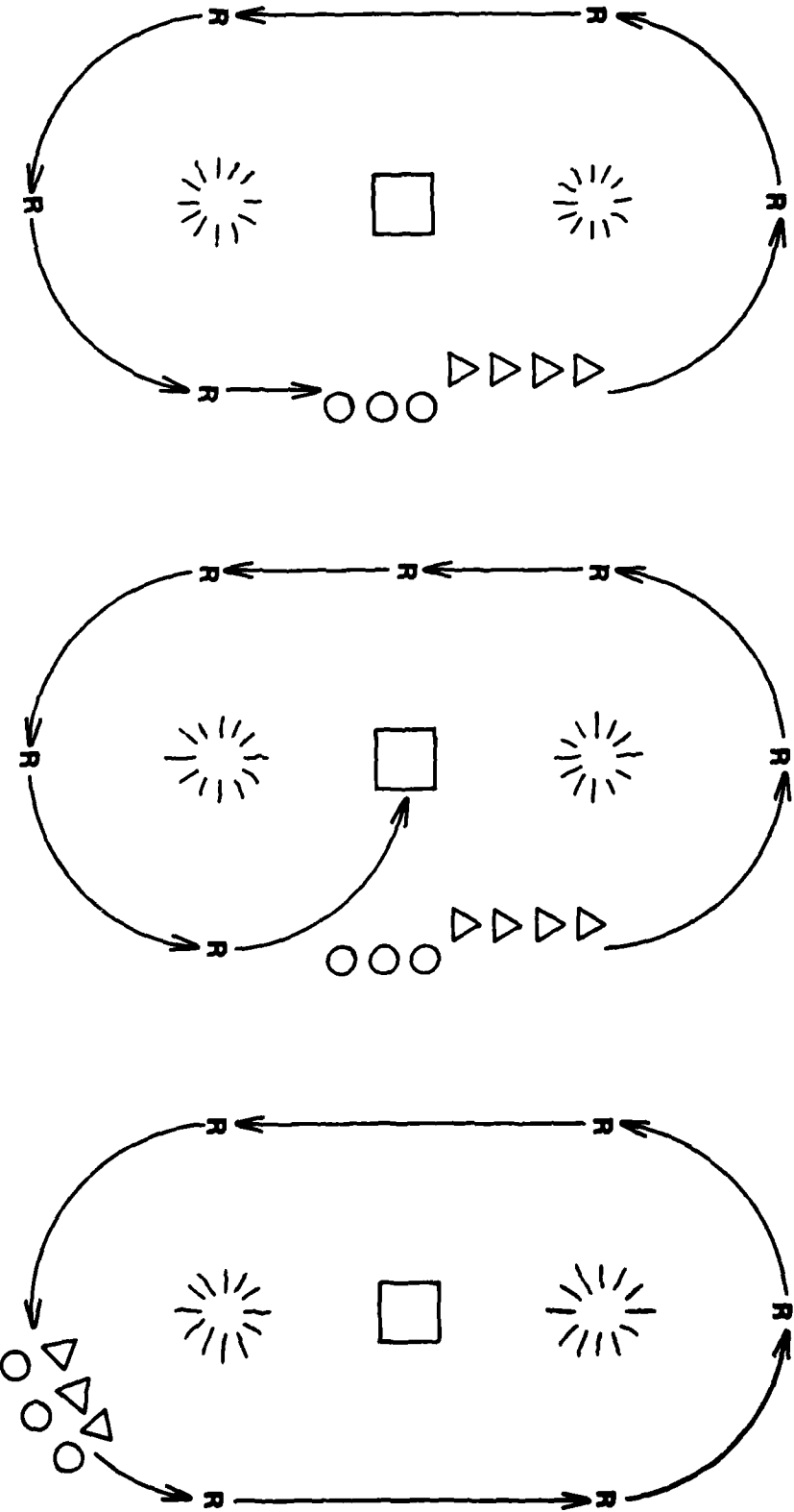


Figure 17. Plans of dancing patterns associated with the men's and women's vision recitations.

the songs was determined by the seating arrangement of the people (Figure 16). In the ceremonies of the wolf clan the women of the clan sat on the north side of the house to the east of the *tənikʔt*, and the men of the clan sat on the same side to the west. Across the east end of the church were the *ʌskʌsʌk*, the three women on the north and the three men on the south. Immediately across from the *tənikʔt* sat the two *təlekʌokw*, dividing the people of the "turkey" (*pele*) clan from those of the turtle (*pukwango*) clan. *Pele* women sat between the male *ʌskʌsʌk* and the *pele* men, and on the west side of the drum the *pukwango* men were located. Finally, the *pukwango* women sat on the west end of the structure. Other clans could host the ceremonies with a different seating arrangement, although they evidently never did so in Oklahoma.

Chief Elkhair would begin the first vision recitation. He sat in the center of the north side of the Big House next to the *tənikʔt* (Figure 16). He began by taking up a turtle-shell rattle (*ʃuhənikʌn*, see Figure 15) and giving it a shake. This was responded to by the *təlekʌok* with beats on a deer-hide drum. He would next commence his recitation, saying a portion of it and then moving into a period of song joined by the *təlekʌok*. As he sang he danced in a counter-clockwise direction, and was followed by a line of men dancers who were in turn followed by women in a line set slightly to the side behind the men (see Figures 14 and 17). The dancers continued around the house in a path outside the fires and centerpost, stopping periodically for further spoken portions of the vision recitation, and ending eventually back at the position at which the recitation had started. Some individuals ended their vision songs by moving in toward the centerpost on its north side.

At the conclusion of a song all of the dancers would return to their seats, and the observers who had been standing during the *wənjikanéi* would sit down. At this point the path of the dancers was thoroughly swept by two of the *ʌskʌsʌk* using turkey-wings as

brooms. The rattle was then passed to the left by "walking it" from person to person until another vision man took it up and shook it. This would commence the next recitation. People were careful not to allow the rattle to make a sound unless they intended it, for a shake was immediately responded to by the drum.

The rattle continued along the north side of the Big House to the women *ʌskʌsʌk*, then across the doorway to the men *ʌskʌsʌk* and along the south side, west, and north until it returned to its starting point. The return of the rattle in its clockwise circuit of the room signaled the end of the evening's observances. The people went to their camps for the remainder of the night. In the era of Oklahoma settlement there were many vision men, and so the services often lasted nearly all night. During the period of the last Big House, the rattle completed its journey between midnight and 2:00 A.M. each night except during the last days of the rites.

The women's vision songs were conducted in a slightly different manner. The women were in a line starting by the east door, while along side them toward the center of the house was a file of men, each with a shell rattle. The men and women proceeded side by side, each man singing with the woman with whom he was dancing. There were similar stops for recitation in the women's circuit of the room, and each recitation was completed when the lines came back to the east doorway.

Harrington indicates that the *ahtəhumwi* was preceded by the gurning of cedar (*pilh-ʌksutin*), while both Nora Thompson Dean and Charlie Webber indicate that this was done on the ninth night. Further, the Michaelson document places the cedar purification on the seventh and twelfth nights, but the activities of the "seventh" night in Elkhair's narrative agree with the ninth night activities of replacing drumsticks and painting the people and *mesingw* representations. In the detail of cedar burning Harrington's account seems divergent from the other sources, but it is possible that there were some changes in practice after the

turn of the century. Given the Michaelson materials it is also possible that Harrington arrived at an arbitrary solution to the report of two cedar burnings, placing the purification where it seemed most appropriate, at the beginning of the culminating events of the twelfth night and day. It is also consistent with the theme of "making everything new" on the ninth night of the ceremonies that the *pilhksutin* should occur on that evening. As we shall see in the further analysis presented below, the ninth night ceremonies constitute one of the elements of the rites that prepared the participants for a new relationship of proximity to the Creator during the tenth, eleventh and twelfth periods of observance.

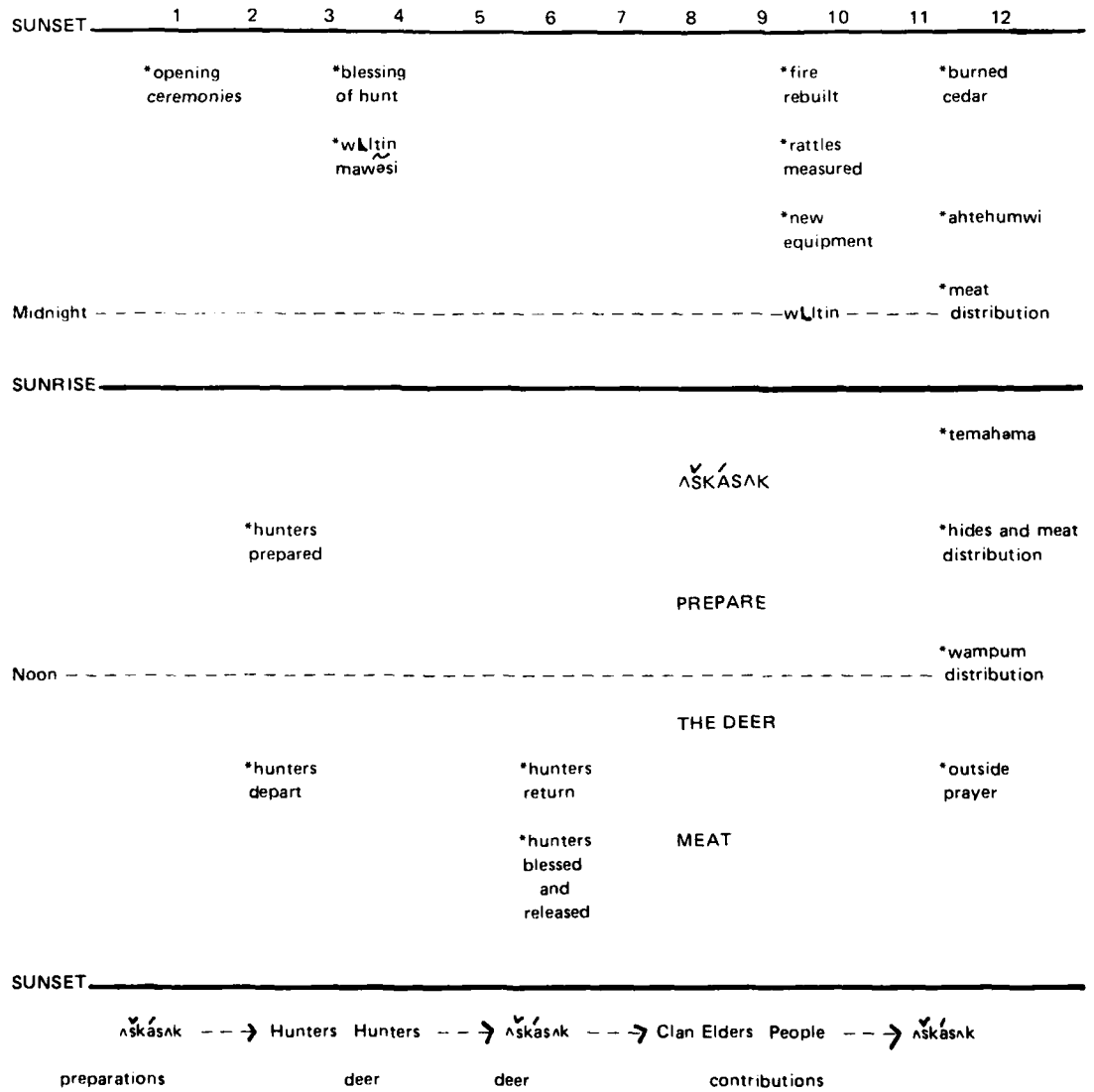
Several other special events in the ceremonies are reported to have occurred on different nights in the sources presented in Table 6. On at least one occasion, but possibly more than once depending upon the work of the *askasak*, loose *kakw* (wampum beads) were scattered on the floor between the center-post and east fire. They were quickly picked up by the helpers and temporarily stored in their mouths while humming. (See the description in Miller and Dean 1976:42). This was called the *mawesi*. Additionally, on several nights the names of men would be called. These would respond to the calling of their Lenape names, even if they had to be roused from sleep outside the Big House, and a section of strung wampum was divided among them. Then the men would file out and pray while facing toward the east outside at the cleaned-off tree which stood in line with the house in the cleared zone between the tents of the *askasak* (Figure 16). This name-calling activity was called the *wltin*. It is likely that both the *wltin* and *mawesi* could occur on more than one night of the ceremonies. The *mawesi* was one of the means of compensating the *askasak* for their work, while the *wltin* included non-visionaries and representatives of specific families in direct prayer for the people. The placement of both of these activities on the fourth and ninth nights is especially consistent with the pattern of events

during the period when the hunt was a central activity of the Big House observances. But in the post-1908 *xingwikáon* it is not surprising to see the *wltin* and *mawesi* occurring on other nights. By then the hunt and the appearance of the *masingholikvn* in the daytime had been discontinued.

Indeed, the key differences between the settlement era Big House rites and the later observances center mainly around the associations of hunting activities. Figure 18 is a reorganization of the Big House ceremony based upon twelve sunset-to-sunset periods, which illustrates the relationships of hunting, meat distributions, and other exchanges of goods (especially wampum) to the overall structure of the ceremonies. Four distinctive three-day periods are defined by this reorganization of Harrington's scheme of worship:

1. During the three days beginning at sunset of the first night and continuing through the departure of the hunters on the third day after commencing the rites, the *askasak* aided the hunters in preparing for the hunt, the selection of the hunters and chief hunter was accomplished, and the *masingholikan* appeared in the camp and aided in setting the hunters to their task.
2. This was followed by the three day period of the hunt, marked by the introduction of the *wltin* and *mawesi* on the fourth evening and ending with the return of the hunters on the sixth day. When the hunters returned they were taken into the Big House, blessed, and released from the hunting obligation (see Miller and Dean 1976: 41).
3. With the release of the hunters the *askasak* took on responsibility for preparation of the deer for distribution of meat, hides, and other usable parts of the animal. This period is terminated on the ninth night with the purification and renewal ceremonies, including a meat

Figure 18. Twelve-day organization of the Big House ceremonies.



distribution according to Elkhair (Michaelson 1912).

4. During the final three nights and days of the ceremonies the activities intensify through further observances of the *włtin* and the use of the new equipment introduced on the 9th night. There are distributions of loose wampum beads and the final culmination of the ceremonies in the *ahtehumwi* and conclusion on the last day.

The Elkhair account (Michaelson 1912) places the departure of the hunters on the morning after the fourth ceremony and their return on the seventh day. Elkhair also placed the introduction of new equipment and associated activities on the seventh night, but Harrington adjusted the chronology of events to include all of these activities except the meat distribution on the ninth night. Additionally, Harrington's placement of the *pilh-čksutin* on the twelfth night before the *ahtehumwi* is based on Elkhair's description. Elkhair also indicated that a meat distribution occurred on both the seventh night and the twelfth day, but Harrington only lists the final distribution, placing it after the *ahtehumwi* on the twelfth night. Since the Harrington study is based upon broader contact with Elkhair and other informants, it probably represents a more accurate understanding of the ceremonies than that of the Michaelson document. If the Harrington material is accepted, then the four divisions of three sunset-to-sunset periods are consistent with pre-1908 ceremonies. Moreover, the divisions serve to identify important elements of reciprocity between generations during the activities of the Big House rites.

The participants in the Big House ceremonies may be divided into four generational divisions: elders, adults, young adults, and children. The elders included people advanced in years and the established visionaries. When a person began to *wanjikanéi* or participate in the *ahtehumwi* it signaled the beginnings of their transformation from adult status to a position as an elder. "Adults" included married

people with several children and those of their age group, but they were differentiated from "young adults" who were unmarried or only just beginning to have children. Persons who were not yet of marriageable age comprised the children's generation.

The most important roles of the Big House ceremonies were carried out by the elders and adults. Adults performed as *askasak* and aided in the *włtin* and other activities, but were differentiated from the visionaries in terms of spiritual power. The young adults performed the important role of carrying on the hunt. Figure 19 summarizes these generational role associations, and shows the relationships linking the spiritual activities of the *xingwikáon* to the hunt. The elders provided prayer and spiritual guidance for the whole congregation, and the prayers and vision recitations served to influence the Creator and other spirit forces to provide success in the hunt and bountiful conditions through the coming year. Success in the hunt enabled the young men to show an immediate return to the people. The hunters were materially supported by the *askasak*, and returned a gift of deer to them when they were successful. The *askasak* in turn prepared the deer for distribution to all of the people, especially to the elders who received the choice pieces of the distribution. Thus, the diverse segments of the population and the spirit world were linked in common activity promoting the welfare of the people.

The contributions of the generations were organized in the four periods of the ceremonies as follows:

1. During days one through three the elders and adults gave their contributions of services in preparation of the hunters.
2. During days four through six the hunters obtained deer and gave the game to the people represented by the *askasak*.
3. During days seven through nine the *askasak* prepared the meat for general distribution, and clan elders received gifts of meat and wampum,

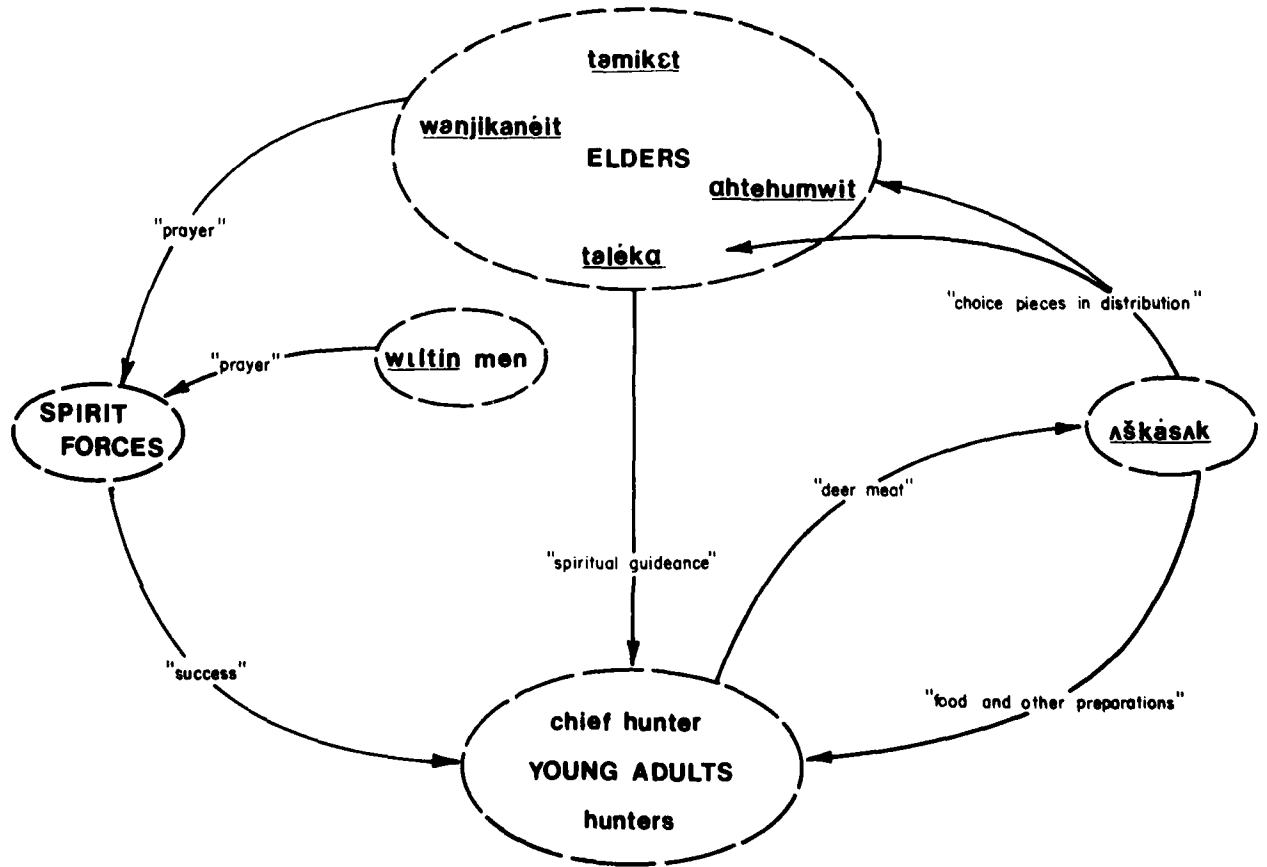
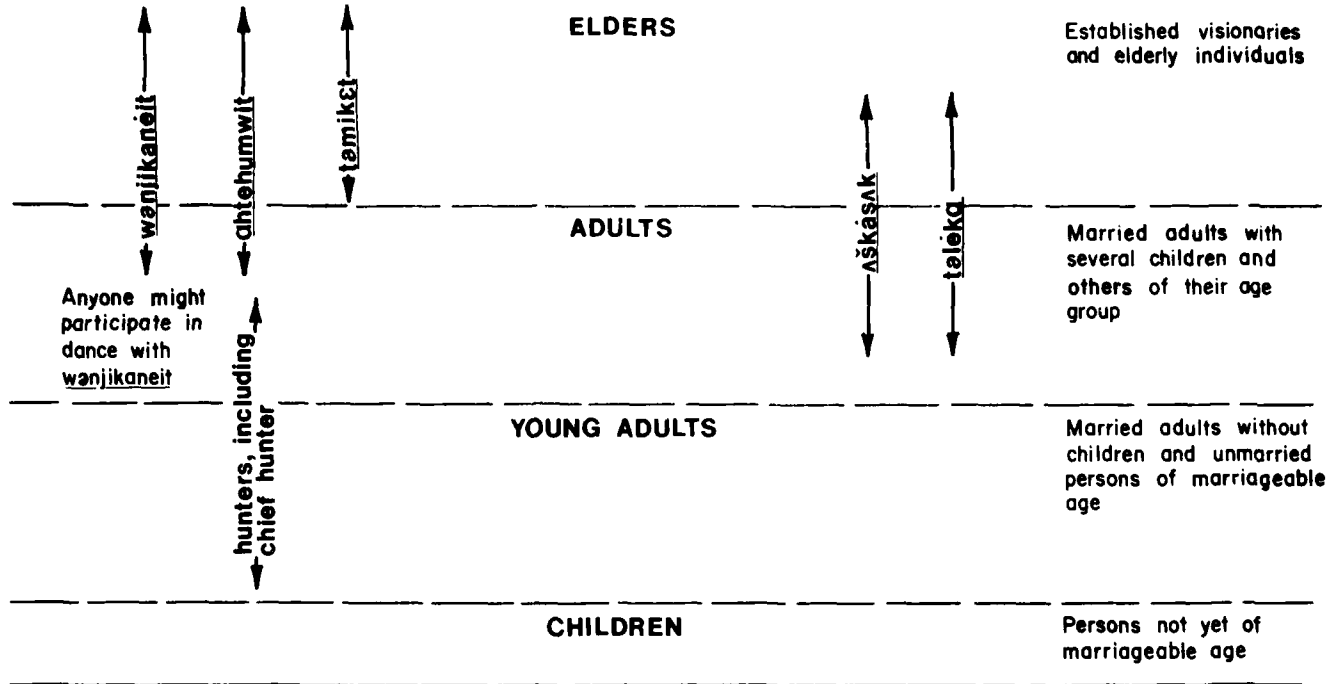


Figure 19. Generational associations, roles, and spiritual associations of the Big House ceremonies during the settlement era.

the beads being measured in lengths on personal turtle rattles.

4. During days ten through twelve many more individuals were involved in the Church, hides and additional food were distributed, and the *ʌsk-ʌsʌk*, *təmikʌt* and *tələkʌokw* were given lengths of wampum for their activities over the twelve days.

The spiritual division of the ceremony occurred between the sixth and seventh periods. During the first six days the spirit forces gave success and prosperity to the people, while during the last six days the people intensified their thanks through prayer and special participation of all generations in the special activities as the observances developed to conclusion.

The importance of material distributions involving meat, food preparations, and wampum cannot be overstressed. Harrington's data, summarized in Figure 20, indicate that all of the families who participated in the Big House ceremonies contributed wampum to establish a general fund of wampum for use during the twelve days. Gifts of a few beads to each participant in the common dance (*lontkən*), according to Elkhair, were made for their participation in extending thanks to the Creator. The bulk of the fund of wampum went to repay the primary participants in the rites. On the final day payments in lengths of wampum (noted in yards expended in Figure 20 following the Harrington account) went to all of the

key people, including the men who closed the ceremony and the chief hunter. These payments supplemented the prior payments to the *ʌskʌsʌk* made during the *mawʌsi*, but no further wampum distribution was made to the *wʌtin* men or other elders. The *ʌskʌsʌk* also obtained beads as payment for meals they prepared for the people camping at the Big House during the twelve days.

Charlie Elkhair's description of the closing meat distributions provides much specific information:

When the turtle shell reaches the two deer skin drummers on the twelfth night it will stop right there and remain all night. Next morning, the fire will be taken out and the trash will be cleaned up. Then they will proceed with the meeting again. When the turtle gets to the headman, the chief then says: "This turtle is back here again where he started from last night." So there will be a man . . . to sing 12 songs. He'll be the last man to sing. While he sings the 12 songs, at the 10th song everyone will rise to their feet and he will dance about the main post, everyone crowding up towards him. After the 12th song all hold up their left hands crying hi! ho! Then all will be told to sit down where they came from. Then one of the attendants, a woman, will distribute beads (wampum in a wooden plate). Each gets 2 or 3 beads. They are given because

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With this information and the data on *kekok* payments it is possible to generalize the overall material and spiritual activities into the following pattern:

	GIFTS GIVEN	GIFTS RECEIVED
SPIRIT FORCES	natural bounty	prayers and spiritual recognition
PRIMARY PARTICIPANTS	prayers and spiritual recognition	<i>kekok</i> and other material recognition
PEOPLE	<i>kekok</i> and other material recognition	natural bounty

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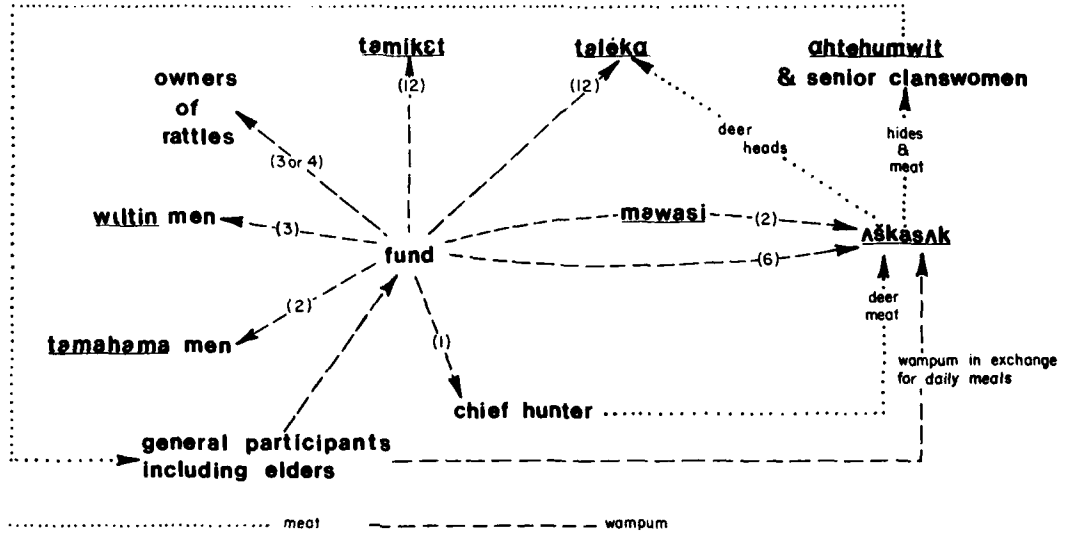


Figure 20. Ideal representation of flows of wampum and meat during the Big House ceremonies of the settlement era.

it is extending thanks to God. So then those attendants are notified to bring in the deer hides of the slain deer; then those deer hides will be piled up in the middle of the meeting house. The chief asks the head hunter . . . who were they who killed the deer. The oldest woman or man of the band (Wolf, Turkey, or Turtle) of the slayer will get the hide. The rest of the deer will be outside cooked in baskets; the attendants will be instructed to bring it in the meeting house. Then the close relatives of the headman will get and distribute the meat to their nearest relatives, then to the older people that are in the house; then the attendants will take the meat and distribute it as far as it goes to all in the meeting house.

(Michelson 1912:7-8).

In these transactions the hunters and *Aškaskak* acted as intermediaries between the spirit forces and the people in the material realm, while the other primary participants acted as intermediaries in the spiritual realm. These relationships continued in the post-1908 observances of the Big House community, but with much reduced emphasis on the hunt and immediate signs of the good things brought about by the ceremonies. Thus, in the later rites emphasis was placed on giving thanks for the blessings of the past and prayers for continued blessings in more general terms.

**The Late Big House Community.** Of the early Big House community we know much less than of the community of the post-1908 era. The personalities of the *xingwikaon* are important to a contemporary understanding of the religious services and the social significance of the traditional Delaware community in Washington county. For this reason we may turn now to consideration of the people who continued the Big House religion through 1924, and who have maintained strong respect for the values of the religion to the present day. It would be impossible to construct a complete list of the individuals who participated in every aspect of worship, however, nor would such a treatment be entirely appropriate. But the following commentary identifies many of the people who were primary carriers

of the traditional beliefs, and attempts to show how the roles of the Big House worship integrated families in a unified social world. By understanding the lives of these families we may also gain some insights into the reasons for the end of the ceremonies, and the failure in attempting a revival of Big House practices in the 1940's. At the same time we may attend to cultural factors that contributed to the rise of other religious participation, including the Peyote religion among some former Big House adherants.

The traditional Delaware community of the settlement era was relatively small. It is apparent that there might have been a broader participation in the ceremonies had there been a tighter concentration of families of Delaware background in the Washington County area, although the fact that other groups did not construct their own meeting houses indicates that persons of traditional orientation were more thinly scattered in other parts of the Delaware region, especially in Nowata and Rogers counties. By 1900 the traditional group north of Bartlesville was established as a social unit through marriages forming several very large family networks. This represented a continuity from the Kansas population where the "traditionalists" had become differentiated from "modernists" over both religious issues and general cultural concerns centering on education and entry into the society of the white man (see Weslager 1978: 419-21).

But also by 1900 the Delaware represented a small minority of the population in Washington county, and the traditional group of the adult generation represented the last set of households comprised mainly of full-blood tribal members (see Roark-Cainik 1979). Indeed, several of the primary participants of the late Big House meetings were married to outsiders, including Shawnee, Cherokee, and whites. These outsiders generally did not participate directly in the Big House ceremonies, although some camped with their families and aided in the outside work of the twelve days. Whites were specifically excluded from the rites. The presence of a non-Indian in the ceremonies, if noted, was sufficient to prompt

some elders to leave the meeting in protest. At any rate, the entire service was conducted in the Lenape language, and general knowledge of the meeting was sent out within the traditional community. Indians, including Christian Delaware, who were unsympathetic to the religion or who violated the sanctity of the services were asked to leave. On some occasions the meetings drew individuals who attempted to disclaim the activities as heathen, but these persons were tolerated only if they did not actually disrupt the services or other daily camp routine.

One of the broad family networks that participated in the ceremonies yearlt is schematically depicted in Figure 21. This network includes representatives of all of the primary roles of the services and seventeen of the families that camped at the *xingwikaon* site. There were at least two other such large family networks including other campers, and there were other families who did not camp but attended the services regularly. Those who camped in later years were major participants and families who lived at some distance from the meeting site. Lucy Parks Blalock remembers the wagon trip to the Big House each evening from Copan, and the long return to town each night so she could attend school during the day. Many individuals pursued their jobs throughout the period of the observances, although the campers generally remained at the site throughout, gaining release from school for their children for the entire period.

It is clear from the clan associations of Figure 21 that the *túkwsit* and *pele* clans were most prominent in the network depicted. Other networks had somewhat different clan associations, but the *túkwsit* clan dominated the community numerically, and was most prepared to host the ceremonies each year. Plural marriages were common in the Kansas Delaware community, but most of the multiple marriages depicted for the elder generations

of Figure 21 were sequential. In earlier times the clans had been subdivided into smaller units related to locations in the original homeland of the Delaware. It is for this reason that Harrington (1921) referred to the units as "phratries" (see Morgan 1976: 171-3; Thurman 1974: 111-134). In Oklahoma the basic unit associations did not function to regulate marriages or geographic associations. One could marry a member of any of the matrilineal groups, including one's own, as is well illustrated in the example. Children who went into the Big House sat with their matrilineal relatives in the section appropriate to their sex. Thus, girls would sit with their mothers, while boys sat with maternal uncles. The children of the early 20th century represent the last fluent Lenape speakers in northeast Oklahoma, among whom there remain only a few fluent speakers today, including Nora Thompson Dean and Lucy Parks Blalock.

#### Significance of Names in Religious Context.

All of the people who attended the Big House had Delaware names. The formal name was of religious significance, for it is by that name that individuals became known to the spirit world. The tradition of name-giving continues today through Nora Thompson Dean (*włnjipahkilēxkwe*, "touching leaves woman"). Formerly, it was practiced by elders more widely (see Weslanger 1971, 1974). There are certain standard elements of names, such as the suffix *-xkwe* (woman) on many women's names. The name also referred to special attributes of a person, or marked them as having certain qualities of personality. The names of some of the prominent people of the last Big House tell us of the subtlety and significance of the naming process. Among the *wanjikanéit* were John Anderson, *witanah-kúxwe* ("he walks with the trees"). The names of Joe Washington and Frank Wilson show similarities of construction with Anderson and Falleaf. Joe Washington was called *nikani-*

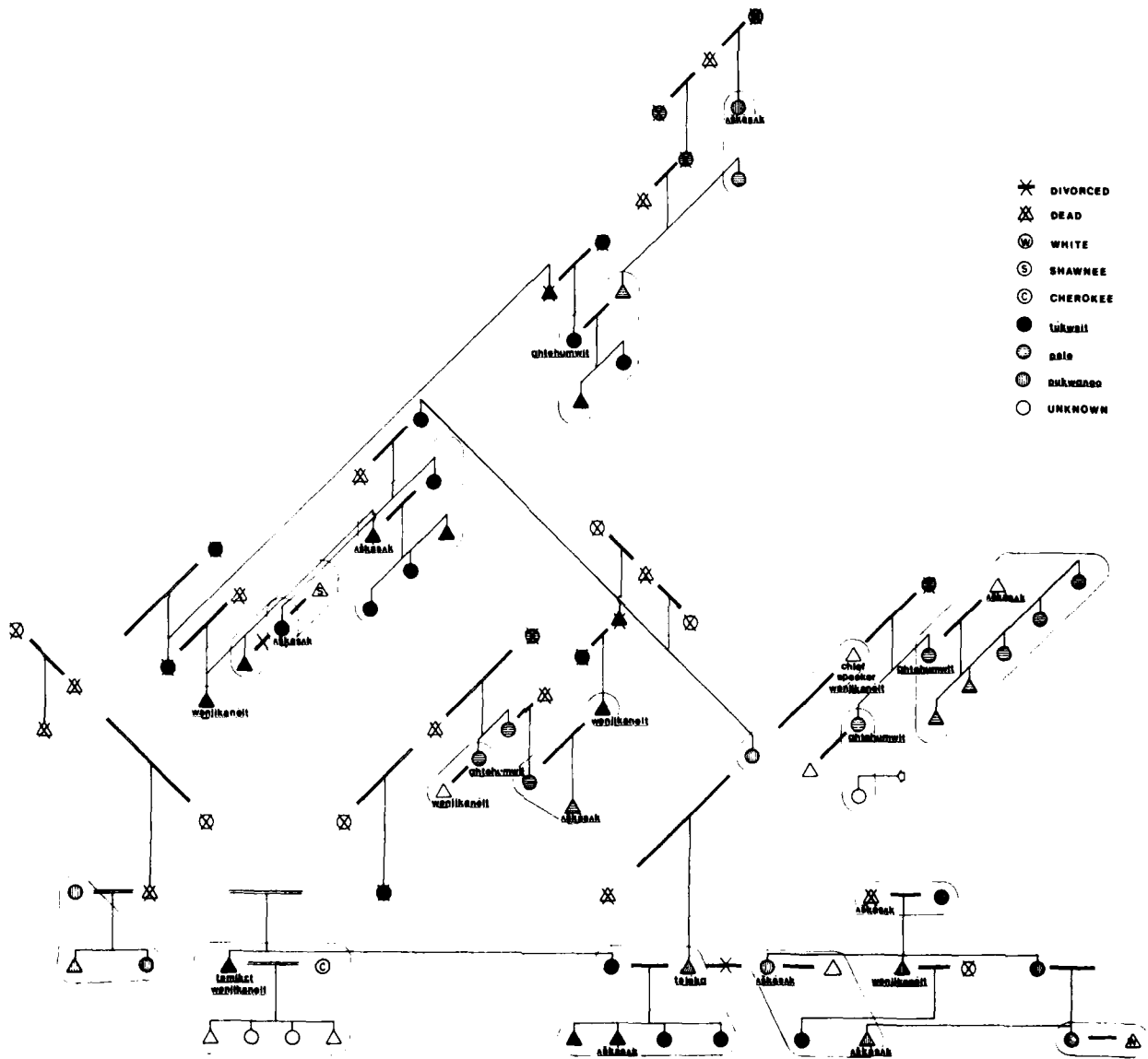


Figure 21. Kinship relations of a family network central to the last Big House church, showing roles of key participants and camping group associations, (partial list according to Nora Thompson Dean).

**pahkúxwe** ("he walks ahead of leaves"). Frank Wilson, who also was one of the two men who usually served as **təmikεt**, was named **pεm-ataεkvmen** "things bloom where he steps." Like many of the people of the era, Wilson had a "nickname" (**εman**) based upon his Lenape name, actually constituting an abbreviated form of the full appellation. Two of the **ahtehumwéitcik** were Liza Falleaf, **tatko-wínau** (no translation provided), and Sarah Wilson Thompson, **εkεlinaóxkwe** ("two women that look alike woman"). Minnie Fouts, who often served as a helper during the late years of the ceremonies, was called **wεmeeh-εεxkwe** ("reverberates everywhere woman"). Among the men **áskásak** were George Thomas Anderson, **kwáckipahkíkamən** ("he makes the leaves move as he steps") and Fred Washington, **εnxinund** ("you see a bit of him"). Fred Washington was one of three younger men who served as a helper during one of the last meetings at the Big House.

Among the older generation names were sometimes developed into English equivalents, either as family names or as nicknames designating the individual. Thus, Captain Curleyhead, one of the major traditional figures of the settlement era (see photograph in Weslager 1972: 409) had the Lenape name of **εεpε-ántpas** ("curley-headed one"). Similarly, Fu Furgeson Longbone had the name **mεtεxin** ("where he landed when he jumped"), and was also known as "Jumper." The attributes noted in names were sometimes in part determined by the namegiver. Some namegivers might provide many names having to do with trees, blooms, or leaves, while others might often relate names to appearance or sound. Names could also be very similar for men or women, such as Anna Anderson Davis' Lenape name **εnxinau** ("that's all you see of her") which is essentially a feminine form of the same expression designated above for Fred Washington.

Calling the name of an individual was and is a sensitive matter to many Delaware, since the name was a special part of the person. Therefore, the names of individual's were known only in the limited social circle of the Big House community, and often they were used so little that they were not widely known at all. When an individual died his or her name passed from use. To speak the name of a deceased person at night or in the late afternoon is still considered to be a dangerous thing to do. During the settlement era and later people were known by their English names or nicknames, or they were directly referred to by kinship terms.

The Delaware did not give names to their children until they were beyond infancy, sometimes as late as the third or fourth year. Acquiring a name from a parent was also not as common as from some older individual, a grandparent, or other elder. This was because names were given by people with status as visionaries. As the number of visionaries was reduced in the population namegiving became less common in all Delaware circles, although a few names are still being given today within the traditional community. Whether a child had a regular name or not, an incident might result in being "dubbed" with a nickname. Nora Thompson Dean relates such a story from her childhood resulting from a situation at the **xingwikáon** shortly after 1910:

One time—I must have been about three or four—we were all up to the **xingwikáon**. All the Delawares camped up there, that is the traditional Delawares, and my mother had a purse that she had made, a buckskin purse with fringes. So she was known for her pie making ability, so the **áskásak** always had her to come and make pies for the people who ate inside the **xingwikáon**. So she said, "you must stay with your dad now, because I'll be busy." Well, I didn't want to stay with him. I

wanted to go with her. I said, "I want to go too," but she said, "no! You'll bother me...you stay with your dad." So I stayed at the camp with him, and my father went to mission school, so he could read, and while he was reading his newspaper there by the campfire, I saw my mother's purse. It was a very precious thing to her at that time, but I was...about three...I didn't know what precious things were. So I got this purse and I drug it over the high weeds outside of the camp area, and I just loved to see those fringes go over those weeds. And so, my mother got back and she saw me dragging her purse around over the weeds, and she took the purse away from me and shook me around a little bit—Delawares never punish their kids very much. And that scolding hurt me worse than the punishment. Well, I must have screamed out and I just really threw a tantrum I guess, and all the old ladies ran up there to see if I had got burnt or something in the fire. And they said, "no she's just mad cause I took the purse away from her." And I kept saying *Umsitunai*, and improper pronunciation of *Umsinutai* which means "the bag." And after that, the old ladies called me "the bag" and said, "this bag here is sure growing a lot!" So I was glad when they finally quit calling me that.

We see from this account many elements of Delaware tradition. For example, children received little direct display of emotion from their parents or elder siblings. They were neither severely punished nor given strong expressions of affection. This was tied to the belief that either emotional display would lead to the sickness or even death of the child. But adults in general were watchful of the safety and needs of children, and elders especially felt strong sensitivity for the young. The children were also brought into the Big

House where they learned the proper rules of conduct in life, and the many particular rules of the ceremonies. All of the accounts in Ruth Blalock Jones' taped interview with people who had been children in the last Big House reflect the sense of awe and responsibility accorded to the ceremonies by the young.

**Another Vision of the Big House.** It is also clear in Mrs. Dean's story and other conversations with her that camp life at the *xingwikáon* was conducted in a relaxed but busy atmosphere. In rows along the area in front of the Big House were the tents of the *Áskásak*; and other tents of the participants were located beside the house and on the adjacent gentle hillslope of the site (see Figure 16). By the *tExtakán*, a "cupboard" used by the helpers to store their supplies people would congregate, watching the pounding of hominy in the large wooden *kohokán* next to the cooking fire in front of the east door. There were smells of hominy and meat dishes and bread, and the various campfires provided warmth on the cooler days. Many of the children at the camp did not see each other regularly during the year, and made use of their chance to visit and enjoy their cousins. Men and boys would sometimes go into the Big House and sing songs referring to the Thunderers, while women cooked family meals or discussed common events and the progress of the ceremonies.

And at dusk when the men *Áskásak* called "*támikÉkw*" (everyone enter) the people would go into the *xingwikáon* and take their places on the clean straw that ringed the house in the seating area. The fires that had been started with a *sanghikán* (fire drill, Figure 15) and maintained from the ninth night had been built up by the helpers, and the particular evening's activities were met with expectation. Everything was ready. Behind the singers on the wall was a bucket of red-oak-bark water to make their voices good in the aid of each

vision singer. The twelve *masingw* looked silently down on the congregation and the last sky light waned above the smoke holes of the room. Behind the *tamikEt* long strings of wamp were displayed on the north wall, the results of the contributions of the people and the stringing work of the women. The turtle rattle rested on the floor in front of the *tamikEt*, itself seemingly vital and waiting. And the leader standing, taking the rattle, transfigured in the firelight began to speak of an animal who had spoken to him as a child, and of what the spirit had told him, and shaking the rattle slowly with his talk.

And he began singing then:

In this way I, Beaver, do this thing/  
When I go/ when I pity him/  
this Delaware...

This is what he sang to me when I was a boy. He took pity on me and I did something for him. So he rose up and looked like a person and told me, "You must always rise up in the *xingwikaon* and sing about me!" They sang songs to me of how they, too, suffered as I was suffering on my vision quest":

In this way I do this thing/  
When I go/ when I pity him  
this Delaware

Now a line of men and several women were dancing, and as the man sang each line of the song the *telekaokw* repeated the line slightly after the vision man, making the high-voiced echo and making the *xingwikaon* seem vast and filled with the sounds of the drum and rattle and experience. The other people, now standing, looked on with the *masingw* till the vision man ended and all sat down again.

A woman *askasak* took a turkey wing and moved along the north side of the dance area sweeping, removing the footprints of the dancers in preparation for the next vision recitation. At the west end of the room a man *askasak* took over and continued the sweeping on the south side, and then took his place

again by the door.

Now the leader had the *askasak* men call names. "One-who-is-like-an-echo!" "Someone-you-can-hear-from-afar!" "It-is-thrown-this-way!" And three others. And outside the sound was heard in all the camps. And the men answered "I am here!" so the people were told "now he has answered all of you." "One-who-is-like-an-echo" was given a length of wampum, and he knelt below the central post in the sacred area near the east fire and divided it between the six men, and they all filed out and prayed twelve times: "Hoo! Hee!" And afterward the turtle continued its journey again through the succession of recitations and songs. On a few occasions an old man might say "*hayupu*"—smoke time—and they would sit quietly and smoked pipes for a brief period. But otherwise, the services went on without interruptions:

We go on the quest for experience as young people who do not know anything. We have no guides to support us in life. But our friends reach out to us:

He comes here/ he did wrong/  
I wait to help him, this searcher/  
I take pity on him, this Delaware  
*wi hehei!*

This is what I learned as a young lad who was cold and hungry. Hear what my friend sang to me:

He comes here/ he did wrong/  
I wait to help him/  
I take pity on him/  
this Delaware/  
*wi hehei!*

And this vision man completed his song moving to the north side of the centerpost, shaking the hand of each of the people who had danced with him, and they all sat down as the *askasak* moved to prepare the floor again.

Early in the morning it was finished, and the people went out into their camps. A sleepy child noticed the seven-little-boys in the sky looking down through the cold night, and

thought they too must be rejoicing with the people on these nights. And in a short time the people were settled, looking quietly at the coals of low campfires, and half-hearing the last wagons leaving with families making the late trip back to Copan.

A young woman awoke to the sounds of the *kahókán*, the rhythmic thumping of two women pounding hominy down in front of the Big House. As she walked down to the helper's area she saw the two women alternating their strokes with long pestles while a third was busy separating the coarse and fine fractions near the cupboard. The coarse part would be cooked with meat brought from town at the outside fire. Several young boys with knickers and caps sat watching the preparations. It was a busy day, for tonight would begin the conclusions of the twelve days, and her mother and other women would sing their songs. She was happy at the sounds and the excitement. Soon the women *askásak* took leave of their work and gathered in front of the Big House to pray. They would leave soon to go into the forest to collect the root from which they made the paint for the last service. And in the late afternoon it would be prepared and once again all would begin to assemble, now dressed in their fine clothes with elaborate ribbonwork and silver pins.

There were many more people from town that night. When all were inside the Big House the people were painted. The women *askásak* put a dab of the red paint on the left cheek of each person, and on the hairpart of women, and the men *askásak* painted the left cheek (black side) of the *masingw*, reaching or jumping up to finish the two faces on the center post. Now the women singers gave their recitations, each aided by a man singer who danced with her around the house. They did not know it then, but this would be the last *ahtehumwi*. They moved in that sacred place, rustling as their feet stepped, the drum sounding alive and the colors of ribbon flashing with each motion, the songs swelling to boost the final prayers toward the twelfth heaven, the home of *kišlamúkóng*. And next morning it

ended with the final dance and the line of participants joining in prayer to the east: "Hoo! Hee!"

**After 1924.** At the end of the Big House period there were very few visionaries, either men or women, through whom the main rites of the twelve days could be continued. The adult generation had been raised in mission schools, and so had not been able to obtain experiences necessary to the recitations. The area had been so thickly settled that there were few deer to hunt, so the important hunting activities of the pioneer era had long since been discontinued. The suit worn by the *masingw* impersonator had been taken, along with other items used in the settlement era church, to museums in the east. The younger population was heavily intermarried with non-Delaware, removing the context for continued transmission of the language through which the ceremonies were conducted. The Big House itself was nearly fifteen years old, and so it underwent a rapid deterioration through disuse. The remains of the *xingwikáon* were finally removed from the location, some parts finding their way into museums and homes, and the equipment kept by its caretakers eventually passing out of the hands of families.

There were other religious forces, too, that held more appeal for some younger Delaware, or that were adopted by people of the old religion because the Big House ceremonies could no longer be maintained. The peyote religion, having been introduced in the late 19th century by John Wilson, became well established among the younger adults who had been deprived of the 19th century traditional Delaware upbringing by conditions of the post-pioneer era (see Harrington 1921; Newcomb 1956b; Petruccio 1934). But among its adherents were also visionaries of the old days, and so a major division of the Big House community came in the wake of rising interest in the Native American Church. Many older people simply rejected the peyote way, and now most contemporary Delaware families know little of its practice or vitality in the Delaware community of the 20th century.



Thus, traditionalism among the Delaware is not totally tied to the shift of religious emphasis toward peyote Spirit, even though it was among the most traditional Delaware that peyote became an established focus of spiritual activity.

But the Big House religion was distinctively Delaware, and ended because its language and the knowledge necessary to its observance waned under outside cultural pressures and conditions. Today, Delaware traditionalism might best be expressed as the orientation possessed by those who remember and appreciate the Big House for what it was, a well-developed knowledge of Spirit forces acting in behalf of all people. The gifts of the Creator are still with the traditional Delaware in the absence of the Big House church, and the heritage of prayer to the Creator is the heritage of all Delaware people at some point of genealogical connection. For those people descended from the Washington county family networks the genealogical connection is close, but for other Oklahoma Delaware the connection is not too much more distant. For a six-year-old Delaware boy dancing in a powwow today, detached and totally self-controlled in his art, the act of a handshake from an elder extends a formal blessing on the new focus of traditional life, and great cultural distance of five generations is bridged. This is the greatest significance of the Big House for the contemporary Delaware community, a significance that cannot be written about or reported upon adequately because it has not yet come to its completion.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has summarized the basic demography, agricultural pattern, and religious orientation of the late traditional Delaware community of northern Washington County. We have observed some of the major changes in patterns of lifeway associated with the community, and endeavored to place these patterns in historical and cultural perspective. Of course, there is much more detail that could be approached in further studies of the period under consideration, and there are many extant ethnographic works presenting other perceptions of the Delaware people in Oklahoma. As a summary statement for this report, however, it is important to concentrate upon the interpretation of the basic aspects of Delaware life in Oklahoma related to the Copan Lake region and the consequences of the construction of the lake and public facilities in the lake area.

Two of the areas of study treated in this report should receive special emphasis in cultural interpretive activities of the operational Copan Lake. These areas are "the Big House religion," and "general Indian pioneer life," essentially the subjects of chapters III and IV. The patterns of pioneer life represented for the Copan Lake area are typical of many Indian groups in the region of eastern Oklahoma, while at the same time they assume the particular traits of the Delaware people. Thus, they are of both general and specific historical interest. Because of the variety of former log buildings and specific differences between Delaware farming and the agricultural and subsistence practices of other groups, some effort should be made to make the interpretive materials for the area comparative in scope. Using the Delaware patterns as a baseline, many central aspects of human ecology in the Copan Lake area may be treated in either displays or brochures. To these materials consideration of the more intensive white farming patterns of the horse-farm period may be added. The Big House religion, because of its specific association with the Delaware, should

be given interpretation in the recreation area to be constructed in the location approximately midway between the two Big House sites. This is the location of the Wilson Cabin which, unfortunately, is too deteriorated to allow an inexpensive reconstruction or stabilization.

The interpretation of Delaware history and religion should also reflect some aspects of the changes which occurred after the turn of the century. The transition from pioneer to settled farm life of the residents of the lake area is an important feature of Oklahoma history, broadening our information base from similar transitions in other parts of the state. Since the Big House religion was continued so late into the 20th century, it stands as one of the most significant traditional Indian practices of the region. Further, the sites of the two Big Houses should be given protection from development for any other purposes, according to the possible kinds of protection outlined below.

The following recommendations present options for interpretive activities representing several levels of cost. Since it is difficult at this time to foresee the amounts of money available for overall interpretation of archaeological and historic places in the lake area, I have attempted to outline both essential features of site protection and interpretation, and priorities for more comprehensive treatment of cultural resource information.

**The Big House Religion.** Basic interpretation of the Big House religion for the operational Copan Lake should include the following elements:

1. A commemorative marker should be placed near, but not on, the Big House sites. The ideal place for the marker would be in the proposed recreation area between the two sites. The marker should indicate the inclusive dates of the functioning of the two churches, basic information about the religion, and a statement

about the continued religious significance of the church locations to the contemporary Delaware people.

2. A brochure explaining the Big House religion should be available through the information office of the Lake.
3. Both of the sites should be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The earlier site is on Corps of Engineers land while the later site is presently in private ownership. There are independent means for the Delaware to reacquire the later site as a place of religious significance, a matter in which the Corps of Engineers could be supportive if the steps toward acquisition are taken by the Delaware people. The earlier site, however, should be given protection by the Corps of Engineers from development for recreation purposes. The present proposed recreation area near the sites does not involve the actual location, so present plans for activity areas are already consistent with such protection.

Additional interpretive activities concerning the Big House religion might include the following displays and materials:

1. A videotape or film explanation of the history of the Delaware in the Copan Lake region emphasizing settlement conditions, the nature of the Big House community, and key personalities of the Big House observances, would provide an excellent teaching resource which could be used both in the lake area and in regional schools. Such a visual display could be produced at low cost, and would represent a lasting contribution to the area history by the Corps of Engineers.
2. An outdoor panel-box display in the recreation area near the Big House locations, including a diorama depicting the last Big House church, replicas of equipment used in the church, and other interpretive material could

also serve as a major interpretive involvement in the history of the Copan Lake area by the Corps of Engineers. There are ample photographic materials and representations in other media that could be included in such a display. This format could also be used for the commemorative materials relating to the Big House.

3. It would be possible to either reconstruct the Wilson Cabin or construct a replica of the cabin. Such a structure could be used to house commemorative materials relating to the Delaware occupancy of the Copan Lake region. In my estimation the reconstruction of the cabin is not advisable, since it would involve as much cost as creating a more substantial and secure replica. This option for interpretation would provide, however, a public display comparable to the Will Rogers memorial at Oologah Lake, and would represent a strong gesture by the Corps of Engineers consistent with the goals of historic preservation in Oklahoma.

My recommendation for interpretation of the historic and Delaware occupancy of the Copan Lake region is that the basic commemorative marker for the Big House locations be prepared in conjunction with the opening of the recreation areas of the lake, and that the videotape interpretation of the period be undertaken. In addition, interpretive brochures and protection of the Big House sites should be a maintained priority of the operative lake.

There is at present a bill before Congress which would change the name of Copan Lake to "Lake of the Delawares." This bill is consistent with the wishes of the Delaware community and the historical circumstances surrounding the Lake location. While it is probably not a standard practice of the Corps of Engineers to enter into advocacy issues on matters such as this, it is my hope that this report will aid all interested parties in understanding the justifications for the proposed

name change. In the event that the name of the lake is not changed, it would be proper for the Corps of Engineers to consider renaming the recreation area near the Big House locations. Such a renaming should be accomplished in coordination with the Delaware people of the traditional community.

**General Pioneer Life.** The interpretation of general pioneer life in the Copan Lake region can be in part accomplished in association with the interpretation of the Big House religion, using the vehicles suggested above. However, care should be taken to provide special recognition of the religion in any general displays or brochures. Additionally, ecological features of the pioneer period can be integrated with the archaeological information brought to interpretation in other public areas or in written materials. The diversity of resource use by Indian pioneers, the history of patterns of log-cabin construction of the region, and changes of vegetation during the historic period should be included in interpretive materials. An excellent vehicle for such interpretation would be a guidebook or tour brochure which would direct the public to areas of the lake showing typical vegetation patterns, geological situations, or architectural features of the pioneer period. This vehicle of interpretation could be accommodated by a series of standing markers at viewpoints, coupled with brief explanatory materials. Copan Lake is situated in an area which allows interpretation of many subhabitats of the ecotone between the eastern forests and the plains, including the Crosstimbers and vegetation associations of the Prairie Penninsula. There are excellent viewpoints in the lake of ridgeline stands of Crosstimbers vegetation, grassland, and lateral stream Oak-Hickory and Elm-Ash-Cottonwood forests. The incorporation of ecological and cultural features of the area in the guidebook format would also allow direction of the public to points of interest in Copan such as the old storefront on the main street.

### JUSTIFICATION FOR STRONG INTERPRETATION OF DELAWARE HISTORY AT COPAN LAKE

The significance of the diverse groups that settled Oklahoma is becoming more recognized by the public throughout the state. Recently, a large series of books outlining the history of the many ethnic minorities of the pioneer era was published by the National Endowment for the Humanities including a volume on Native Americans (Strickland 1980). Because of the large number of Indian groups in the state, much more specific work needs to be done on the histories of individual tribes for the period of the last century. Most anthropological work stresses patterns of life which preceded the pioneer era or, alternatively, treat essentially contemporary concerns. The generations of the settlement era, the social and cultural change that dominated the lives of the Indian pioneers, and the important contributions of the people and era to our contemporary situation need fuller study. The work supported by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers concerning the historic period, especially as it pertains to concentrated Indian populations, is among the most important cultural preservation work now being accomplished in Oklahoma. It fills a gap that has been neglected by the academic world, and which provides a rich field for understanding both our specific heritage and general aspects of human endeavor. But unlike the academic anthropologist or historian, the Corps of Engineers is in a unique position to bring the interpretation of this history to the public in very direct ways, through experiences integrated with their leisure activities, and through inexpensive media presentations offered on a complementary basis to the public educational system.

In the Copan, Dewey, and Bartlesville regions there are many people of Delaware heritage who would benefit culturally from

the strong interpretation of the historical information summarized in this report. Consistent with the general public interest in heritage of recent years, there is a *growing number* of young Delaware who, although they cannot recapture the past in action, are attempting to recover better knowledge of the specific history. The non-Indian public would also benefit from a demystification of the traditional cultural patterns of the Delaware people. In Copan today, there is great interest in the Old Indian community, but little factual knowledge of the community upon which a valid appreciation of the past can be based. This study represents only a first step toward building the kind of public information through which these needs can be met.

## COPAN ETHNOHISTORIC REPORT

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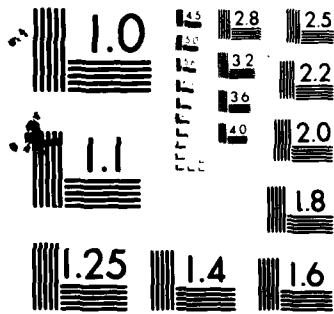
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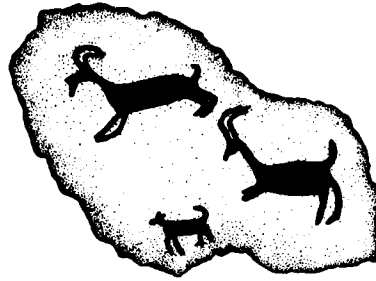
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