

[Worksheet]

TAPE LOG

Name of person(s) interviewed: Curly Bear *Surname?*

Fieldworker: Forest

Date of interview: 3/6/04

Location of interview: were his booth, just west of the arena

Other people present: several random people stopped to listen; his kid

Brand of tape recorder: ??

Brand and type of tape: RCA - RC90

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE QUALITY (background noise, etc.)

picked up our voices pretty good (better than i thought) picked up the ~~??~~ *power* music in the background

- there was a lot of background noise

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

basic overview of the regalia & what it means to him.

TAPE INDEX
COUNTER NO.

SUBJECT

(~196) Curly Bear: *Eagle Feather*
To start off with, the eagle feather, I didn't wear it today, I'll wear it tonight. During the informal dances, I generally don't wear an eagle feather, but when I'm dancing, when it's not informal, have the real grand entry, I'll have an eagle feather on. The eagle feather in my hair stands for ^{all} the elders. The elders, your grandpa, my grandpa, not just the Indian people but everybody - all the elders all over the world. The elders →

(Adapted from Discovering Our Delta, A Learning Guide for Community Research, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, <http://www.folklife.si.edu/MississippiDelta/discoveringourdelt.htm>)

www.Valdosta.edu/folkwriting Chapter 5

are waiting for us to come and ask them questions
where they can teach us. All we gotta do is ask
them. So that's what the eagle feather stands for.
I'll wear it ~~is~~ in honor of our grandfathers.

Tape Index

- A little background information, heritage, family, etc.
- Regalia and what Curly Bear's eagle feather means
- Feathers, fringe, face paint
- Breastplate; more on feathers
- The shield, war club and fan
- The turtle shell, earring
- More about feathers
- Curly Bear's favorite part of the powwow

- I. Subtitles
 - a. Tribes and family
 - b. Regalia
 - i. Eagle feathers (acquiring)
 - ii. Fringe
 - iii. Bustle (feathers used)
 - iv. Paint
 - v. Breastplate
 - vi. Bustle (more detail on the feathers and why he uses them)
 1. Various birds
 - vii. Shield, fan and war club
 - viii. Turtle shell
 - ix. Buzzard feathers (more on feathers related to the bustle)
 - c. Favorite parts of the powwow

- II. Themes
 - a. Regalia
 - i. The overall theme of my interview/notes were the regalia; this is what I set out to research so most of my time was spent looking at the regalia of the dancers (mainly Curly Bear). After talking about it I realized that the regalia is (in most cases) a symbol for something significant to the dancers and the 'theme' shifted from what they were wearing to what it all meant.

- III. Folk life Genres
 - a. There is an immense amount of information present in the regalia (more so than I thought at first). Several types of folk life genres are present here; the actual regalia, the dancers, the materials, how they make the regalia, oral traditions, visual traditions (as far as how the regalia looks – which is only important to a degree).
 - b. The dancing is a major part of the Indian culture – right there we have two distinct genres; regalia (for the dancers) and the dancing.
 - i. The regalia can be broken into a few related genres – material culture and oral traditions
 1. Material culture – what is used for the regalia and how it is formed into a visually cohesive attire
 2. Oral traditions – I say oral traditions are applicable because someone had to teach the dancer how to make his regalia and a large part of Indian customs are passed on through word of mouth. Chances are that most of the dancers learned how to make their regalia by talking with an elder (or family member or what-have-you) about it.
 - ii. The dancing is the other major genre of folk life here. It can be broken into the types of dances and how the dancers learned the dances.

1. Types of dances – off-hand I can only think of fancy dance and jingle dance but there are many more different types of dances for different occasions (I'll get a more specific list when I check out the books/videos on them)
2. How the dancer learns the dances – Most of the dances will probably be learned just by watching other dancers. In talking with some of the dancers, a few (and apparently this isn't too uncommon) of them 'just had it in them'; that is, dancing is innate to them and they feel it is something that they have to do – not because they feel they are obligated by anything to dance but because something in their nature drives them to the arena to dance.

3-6-04

Forrest: Valdosta State Research Project. Tell me a little about your tribe and heritage.

Curly Bear: I come from the bear society; my people are the bear society. It's the oldest society in the land. It's bear society. I'm of the bird clan of the Cherokee of Georgia, I'm a Cherokee. Cherokee and Irish. What I like to tell people when I go to schools and dances and teach – I'm afraid when they hear an Indian's coming they expect a full blood. You know, I like to tell 'em I'm a mix breed. Ever since Columbus come he's been mixing and our people are the first ones that he touched and we've been touched the longest. I'm a perfect example of what Columbus done to a people, is what I tell 'em. My mother is Irish and I'm Cherokee – I was raised up traditionally. I aint a show, what you see now is what you see at my house. I'm Cherokee. I follow the path my grandfather taught me and that he walked. I named my first son Hunter. I got another son named Two Bear. I got one more son, two years old – Hawk, Blue Hawk, Hawk Blue is his full name. And I got a wife; shes from the red bear tribe. That's pretty much it.

(196) F: I'm focusing on the regalia part for my part of the project, can you go over what you have and what it means to you

CB: To start off with, the eagle feather, I didn't wear it today, I'll wear it tonight. During the informal dances I generally don't wear an eagle feather but when I'm dancing... when it's not informal, have the real grand entry I'll have an eagle feather on. The eagle feather in my hair stands for all the elders. The elders, your grandpa, my grandpa, not just the Indian people but everybody – all the elders all over the world. The elders are waiting

for us come and ask them questions where they can teach us. All we gotta do is ask them. So that's what that eagle feather stands for. I'll wear it in honor of our grandfathers.

(281) F: How'd you get your feather?

CB: Well, the first eagle feather I got... I always try to treat people the way I want them to treat me. I don't like to hurt people's feelings and if someone howdy's at me I like to howdy back. And uh, in just that way helping people around the dancing arena when they... they wanna dance and can't dance. Not knowing I was earning an eagle feather, but uh helping people like that. That's how the first eagle feather come. And the great spirit just sent the rest of them in his own way. The eagle feather is the most sacred feather to us. That's the main thing, the eagle feather I wear on my head represents all the grandfathers just waiting to teach us. All we gotta do is ask and listen. The next thing is my breechcloth – of course I wear it to cover myself up. But I try to get a lot of fringe. In the old days the reason they wore fringe is because during times like this, setting around, they'd make their fringe and that's what they'd use to tie stuff, tie their arrows...

(385) F: Squirrel was talking about that; you'd just break a fringe off to tie down your tent, its functional.

CB: Yea, you just do that. Wear it, it looks good and when you need it's there and that's how that started. The next thing I like to tell about is our bells. (jingling) These bells right here – these are deer hooves and these are bells – but in the old days this is what they

would wear and they would put these on kids. The place, the area... to keep from watching the youngin's all the time they'd put these type bells on them and they'd run all over the place, you know. And also they'd know where he was at, but it would scare off the bears and animals that would actually get a youngin' if he could. So that's what they was used for, today we dance in competitions and a good sounding bell to a judge, to get his attention to you, you know, is a trick. So I'll try to keep good bells so the judge will watch me and I might win the thing. I wear a bustle on my back. That bustle it represents all the...[gets fuzzy here; people?] ... I got several different kinds of feathers on my bustle. I just built a new one. I got one type of feathers on it now and as I go along I'll add more and more, I'll have all different kinds. But them feathers, all these feathers on my back, I wear them to represent all the people. All the people that needs to go to the grandfathers and ask them questions and learn not just about the Indian ways and the things they should know but the things that everybody should learn about. Maybe if they're white, there's things like canning food that the young people could go and ask the old people how to do it. The feathers on my back represent the people all the people and that's pretty much it. And the paint, I wear paint and from different times I'll change it. But the paint is personal; it represents the ghost in me and the ghost I'm dancing with in the circle. And when we dance in the circle our people are buried just beneath the ground and a lot of times you'll see me asking them to come up and dance. When I do this motion with my feathers, I'm asking them spirits to come up and be with me and dance with me. This paint, it's personal, but it's a spirit, it represents a spirit. And when you dance out there you dance for thousands and thousands of people who have done, you know, lived their life and gone on, died. Went to the happy hunting ground

F: It's starting to rain.

CB: They left their footprints in the dance arena so I do the same to carry on the tradition of my people

[Gets fuzzy here]

(620) F: What about the breastplate?

CB: My breastplate, it was a gift to me by a fellow. This ones made out of rivercane generally you use bone. But it protects my heart. If it keeps raining we will. (his kid came up and asked a question real quick then ran off) In the old days the breastplate was wore more or less a, uh, charm. You know a protective charm. Like a rabbit's foot or something, protect you heart. And for looks. But it's like a charm to me and the elders.

(692) F: What kinds of feathers are on your bustle?

CB: On my bustle I use buzzard feathers. They're plentiful to get and you know, if one messes up... uh, to me when one feather gets messed up, I probably got the raggedest bustle out here - but its spirit. When you get out there and you dance and your feathers hit the other dancers, well to me I feel I'm collecting medicine from them. Like gathering luck. My feathers are buzzard feathers on my bustle and it's called a peace eagle. You got

the eagles, war birds, you got the hawk, it's a war bird, the owl, he's a death bird. But after the battles over, then the buzzard, he waits 'till the battles over and he moves in and cleans up the battlefield. And that's what....

(760)F: I noticed you had a shield and a fan and I'm not sure what the third item was, almost looked like an ax.

CB: My shield is another, uh, shield from evil. It's during the dance it's to ward off bad luck, so to speak. That's the best I can explain it. Its protection against bad spirits. This is just a war club, right there. Just for no reason I carry it. It's like a comfort blanket; I guess you'd say. And my fan its buzzard also and it represents all the people. All my feathers represent all the people except this one eagle feather and it represents the great spirit, utmost, but it represents the grandfathers that's waiting to teach us. Of course the great spirit is everybody's grandfather. And that's... lotta times, sometimes I'll take different objects in the dance, it'll be something that somebody had gift to me and I'll honor them by dancing with it. This here (the war club) somebody, a real good friend, give this to me, made it for me and I've been dancing with this thing since I've been dancing. And I've knocked the head off it. The original reason I dance with it is because someone give it to me. So they thought enough of me to give it to me, so I'll dance with it – to make them feel good and it makes me feel good to have it.

(888) F: And the turtle shell?

CB: Well this is just for looks, mainly, I use this to wipe the sweat out of my eyes. But the turtle represents long life to our people anyways. He's a long life symbol. Stuff like that it's, to make it simple, it's good luck stuff. Long life symbol, anytime you see a turtle on a picture, on a teepee, or something, and it's a long life symbol. It's an honor to be painted.

(922) F: What about this shell earring?

CB: The shell it's a gift to me, I generally wear a bone, some type of bone. It don't represent nothing, it's just to make me pretty. I'm so ugly it makes me pretty. (laughing) A friend of mine give me that, and I'm glad it didn't fall out out there, a long time ago and once she give it to me she said it was real old and it's real thin. So I wear it to be pretty.

(960) F: And to honor them.... It's interesting that you chose buzzard feathers, I noticed a lot of hawk and eagle feathers being used...

CB: They're the closest feather to an eagle feathers as far as the looks but i just chose to use that type of feather. Eagle feathers are not easy to get. The ones you do get you earn, they come to you in a way. I chose to use buzzard because they're plentiful. One messes up real bad I can replace it pretty much pretty easy to keep my bustle in good shape. Like I said before, I had my bustle before, I just finished with this one - I been wearing it for 15 years and it I don't think that I even, I might have changed a few feathers in the

middle but none on the side. They was getting pretty rough but like I said I was gathering medicine. To me they was medicine Indian feathers in that way brushing up against my brothers in the dance.

(1056) F: What's your favorite part about the powwow?

CB: My favorite part about the powwow. Talking to people really, like this. I love to dance. I wouldn't be here if I didn't like to dance too. But uh, just talking to the people. I've made more friends and met more people at a powwow than I could anywhere. People from the schools, the youngins, they come out. They're interested in what's going on. They'll listen to you. And you ain't gotta be real educated to talk to them. Just tell them what you want.

(1104) F: There's a lot of educators out here. Its good to focus on teaching...

CB: The favorite part is the drum. The people in the drum. Talking to the people in that drum right there. (drumming gets pretty loud here)

(1118) F: Is there anything else you felt you wanted to say?

CB: Well, when you get up and leave there will be plenty I want to say... (end at around 1130 seconds [I think its seconds on the tape player])