

Interview with George Francis Dorin, Sr.  
 Miami Nation of Indians  
 October 1, 2005  
 Portage, Indiana (met at a restaurant)  
 by Mike Gonella

Family

- Hi father died when George was very young, electrocuted at his work
- Mother: Thelma Louise Baker, changed name to Betty, was Miami (Eagle Band); she didn't remarry until George wa
- Stepfather: didn't let them talk about Miami stuff. He lost out on growing up learning Miami ways and feels that loss. But he learned a lot from his Great Uncle a bit later in life.
- Grandmother: Sarah E. Hale, changed name to Len
- Great uncle: William Francis Hale, Chief Mongonzah. Chief until Francis Shoemaker became chief. He lived near Shideler, IN and knew a lot of Indian ways. George re-met him when he was 23, in 1953, after he returned from the military and didn't care what his stepdad thought about his Indian relatives anymore.
- Son: George "Greg" Dorin, part of Eagle Band also.

His Life

- Was on tribal council until a few years ago when he got tired of the politics
- Has been to Oklahoma and MTO numerous times
- Loves to camp, is fixing up a pop-up camper right now; wife doesn't camp
- Asked to give an Indian name to his first great-grandson (Little Spirit Wind) that only lived 6 weeks.

<b>Plant</b>	<b>Cultural Information</b>	<b>Who learned from?</b>
Sassafras	Harvests himself, in fall, around the end of October when the sap is down. Learned how to do this from his great uncle. Harvests roots about finger to 2" in diameter. Slices them about 1/2" thick and breaks apart. Bring to boil, then let them steep, sometimes overnight, which makes it really dark. Drink with a little bit of honey. Brings some to the longhouse used during the sweat. Only takes a few roots from each tree, leaves some behind. Offers tobacco first. He once harvested a root 3-4" in diameter but only took the top portion of the root, leaving the bottom half intact so the root would still grow. He covered the exposed portion with sassafras bark and carefully repacked the earth around it to help it heal.	Great Uncle (Miami)
Blueberries	Picked these as a kid and eat them	Common knowledge

Elderberries	Picked these and ate as a kid. Mother made elderberry wine and jelly	
Tobacco	Used on ticks and leeches. Chew tobacco and put on the ticks and leeches, they back right out. Also, steep and put in the garden when planting, kills worms.	
Cattail Fluff	Women can use this and milkweed floss when they are menstruating	History books
Miami Corn	Grows. Got his seed from Bruce Thorington (Miami) who has a lot of knowledge about Miami culture and plants	Miami relatives
Chickory	His mother used it to cut with coffee to save money	Miami relatives
Acorns	Remembers his grandmother saying you can pick acorns and leach them in water to remove the tannic acids, for eating	Miami relatives
Kentucky Coffee Tree	Can eat the seeds just like a bean	Great Uncle (Miami)
Cattail	Weaves cattail mats for wikiup covering  Can eat green [female] flowers. Spring, harvest early shoots, cook like asparagus, very good and sweet. Later spring, harvest roots, some as big as wrists, long as forearm, cut up, fry, bake. Winter: has dug roots in winter but they are old and wormy. Only get shoots, white with green tips, in early spring. Leaves made into mats for sitting on.	Tribal workshop led by Ray White (Miami)  Great Uncle (Miami)
Red Willow	Used for wikiup framing. Harvest near waterways in spring when bark comes off easily. Cut lengthwise to remove a strip of bark—rest comes off easily	Miami relatives
Wikiup	Was going to put in a garden, but thought about a wikiup in that same spot. The Creator said to do a wikiup. He decided to till it for a garden, but the 1-year old tiller wouldn't start. He then built the wikiup and when he went to till a flower bed, the tiller started right up. (Also, his grapes hardly ever produced until he started talking to them, and fertilized them too. This year they produced so much he had to give them away).	