



INTERVIEW "CACIQUE OF THE TIGUAS"

[Page 1]

There is one large room to which has been added, a tiny addition, which serves as a guest room and this little room was crowded with two or three straight chairs, center table, and a little dresser on which proudly reposed a recent picture of Demasio with his cherished drum.

The old man's face lighted momentarily from its stoical expression, as he talked of the drum, which had been a tribal possession from the long ago past. It's a war drum, fashioned from an old cotton wood (Alamo) log. It's present covering is cowhide, tied on with leather thongs, and Demasio does not know how many or what kind of hides on the old drum have previously summoned the Tiguas to War or celebration of victories....

His father (deceased) had bequeathed the house and land to the sons, and the little irrigated farm produced beans, corn and grain which helped to provide for the widow who assisted by making pottery in the primitive Indian

[Page 2]

fashion, which was different from the clay pots made by the Mexican potters. Hers were made of vivid red clay and decorated in bright colors and her son claims it was superior to the Mexican article. He seems very proud of being pure Indian, which he claims for himself and a cousin, though he married outside the tribe his first and second wives (now deceased) were Mexican women...

[Page 3]

...His native Indian dress is used only in the ceremonial dances which take place all during the year in celebration of certain saint's days at the Mission.

Then the old drum awakes and Damasio beats the measures for the Matachines dance which sometimes lasts all day and night. The title Cacique, or Chief, is bestowed from father to oldest son who is chosen for life. Other officers of the tribe are elected to serve for a certain length of time.

[Edited for clarity]

Excerpted from:

Interview of the *Cacique of the Tiguas*

Interviewer: Vera Elliott

Interviewee: Damasio Colmenero, Tigua Chieftain

Location of Interview: Yaleta, Texas

Date: November 19, 1936

From *Life Histories: Interviews from the Work's Progress Administration, 1934 – 1941*.

Library of Congress, American Memories,

Accessed: May 17, 2015