

April 7, 1969

T-400

Index side #1, part one, recording time 25 minutes.

Informant: Gertrude Thompson Blevens, 81-year-old Cherokee  
Terecita, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: According to the old timers still living, Spring Creek and its tributaries have changed little in their lifetime. However, its peoples, places, settlements, and terrain have changed very much, and there are a few living to-day who have been witness to these events. One of these people is Gertrude Thompson Blevens who has lived in the Terecita Community nearly all of her life.

The original Indian settlement has been known from early days by different names such as Two Valleys, Raven Crossing, and Glory. The present settlement known as Terecita dates from about 1911, when the village got its first post office. It was named by a post office department official, who did not like any other names suggested, and took the name from the Latin, or some foreign language, which in essence means "a place on earth". Her father, Johnson Crisp, was the first postmaster, and who also had a store there on the bank of Spring Creek. In those early days being a postmaster was hardly more than a courtesy job, and Mrs. Blevens recalls that the postal cancellations in the first <sup>three</sup> months of operation amounted to \$3.29. Mail was hauled from Moodys by buggy or horseback.

The original country store was built there about 1898, and she believes it was built by a man by name of Bell. Her father bought the store in 1910, having moved from up on the hill north of the village. The first store was a big structure made out of native rough sawed lumber and faced the north. In more recent years it has been replaced with a block building which now faces the east. She recalls that there were only two white families living in the area in 1910. Over a period of about sixty years many of the Indians have been pushed out of the rich Double Springs and Spring Creek Valleys as white people have invaded this beautiful country which was once a haven of refuge for the Cherokees. Many Cherokees still live in this country but they will be found back up the hollows and up on the hillsides, but none will have the nice country estates and cattle filled pastures - the government has seen to that.

The first school in that district was the Porter School. Sam Porter was an Indian and gave an acre of his land for the school. This school was located about two and a half miles north of Terecita. This old school was abandoned in the late 1920s. ~~When the school was abandoned it was burned down and the site was used for a cemetery.~~ Mrs. Blevens started the first grade at Porter School about 1900. Not too far east of Porter School was the Barnett School, which existed from about 1912 to about 1925 when it burned and was never rebuilt. On the east side of the Creek was the location of the first Terecita School built about 1909. Because of potential damage from flood waters the school was moved and rebuilt on the west side of Spring Creek where it is to-day.

On the east side of the settlement is a high hill. Mrs. Blevens recalls when the family would sit on their porch in warm weather and watch the goats play on this steep and rocky bluff. There was one old goat in particular they enjoyed seeing. An Indian family by name of Britches