

T-422

April 24, 1969

Index side B, recording time 20 minutes, interview time two hours

Informant: Lucinda Sanders Wilhite, 89-year-old Cherokee,
Wauhatchie Community, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: Mrs. Wilhite has saved and preserved many old papers, records, and artifacts of over half a century ago. She shows a copy of the Tahlequah newspaper dated May 7, 1889 in which is a feature article regarding the dedication of the new Cherokee Female Seminary, which later became Northeastern State College. With the story is a picture of the speakers' platform, and some of the speakers for the occasion. Those named in the caption were Toona Brown, Joel Bowles, Sam Faulkner, George O. Butler, Joel B. Mayes (then Chief of the Cherokee Nation), Bill Harnage, George O. Sanders, Henry Covel, M. E. Brown, Soggie Sanders, and Louis Beamer. She tells that the town of Tahlequah was very young in those days and from about a block north of the Capitol square north to the Seminary was just an open brushy space with a crooked dirt road. She also showed a picture taken of the ruins of the old Cherokee Female Seminary at Parkhill taken April 10, 1887, and which is an original photograph. In another issue of the newspaper dated Dec. 13, 1888 appears an item in which the officials of the Cherokee Nation passed Senate Bill No. 62 providing over \$76,000 for the support of the schools of the Nation and the Seminaries. Other news items appearing in the newspaper of that day included a brief about Sheriff's deputies Simon and Rusk who came in late Monday night bring Joe Tulsa, Wasasa, Wiley Whitefox, and James Larney who were charged with murder. Also, other citizens who failed to escape the long arm of the law and were brought in were Wesley Sugar, James Amecha, Art Davis, and Bart Koo-la-oo who were all charged with larceny. Charles Swimmer and Jim Broadaxe were also picked up and charged with introducing (bringing whisky into the Cherokee Nation). It was further stated that Tulsa, Still, Wasasa, and Larney were further charged with the recent killing of Mose McIntosh. All of these four were Creek Indians. Berryhill and Buzzard were two other Indians still at large and wanted on a murder charge. The paper stated that it felt sure they would be captured or killed shortly. A strongly worded part of the editorial dealt with the Sec. of the Interior leasing the Strip, and condemned the action.

She tells that her father, John M. Sanders, at one time was Supt. of the Cherokee Insane Asylum which was located at Parkhill. This place of refuge was a big three story building and could take care of about 50 patients. She recounts an incident related by her father: One day an inmate of the Asylum, Sik Martin got mad at one of the attendants and threw a slop bucket at him, hitting him in the face. The attendant threw the bucket back and cut the inmate across the head, requiring a number of stitches to sew the cut. Facilities for caring for the mentally ill were meager, and lack of treatment knowledge suffered, but they did the best they could in that day eighty or ninety years ago.