

T-511

July 24, 1969

Index side A, recording time 10 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Wilson Terrapin, 66-year-old Cherokee,
Mulberry Hollow, Adair County, Oklahoma

Subject: Far back in the Cherokee Hill country is the community of Mulberry Hollow. Near the head of this hollow there used to be an old log church building partly shaded by a large mulberry tree. The church and the hollow became known as Mulberry Church and Mulberry Hollow. The church has been gone a long time, but few changes have come to this serene and peaceful valley. Many Cherokees have been born here and spent all their life here. Many still live not too much unlike days of long ago. Their way of life has been little affected by the rapid march of progress. Mulberry Creek flows gently down the valley and its clear cool waters are one of the joys of these people. Many crawdads have been taken from the little creek. It has also been the scene of many a washday for the Indian women. It has long and still is the "bathtub" for many on a hot summer night. Homes built long ago nestle up against the hillsides. To the delight of any Indian, trees, bushes, and plants of all kinds grow profusely. The newer Mulberry Hollow Church is the center of community activity. Here gather the McLemores, Swiners, Cheways, Blackbirds, Hogners, Beans, Alexanders, Terrapins, Hoskins, Wolfe, and many others.

To the north is Rabbit Trap community, to the east is Beaver country, and to the west is Caney Creek Valley. To the south is lots of whitemans.

This is the country Wilson Terrapin has known all his life. He has traveled and hunted over a wide area from his home in these hills and knows well most of the people, places, and a lot of the happenings.

At the beginning of this visit Wilson tells about the old grist mill that used to be at Hummingbird Springs at the head of Caney Creek. The Hummingbird family had settled there after their arrival from Georgia in 1839 and was one of the first to start a mill according to stories his old people had told.

Another of the original settlers of that area was the Adairs. Over on the mountain south of Caney Creek was the home of Squirrel Adair, who lived long before Wilson's time, but he remembers his folks talk about him. He was a good and industrious man, and helped his neighbors in many ways. On the side of his mountain is a little abandoned cemetery named for him. His tombstone reads simply Squirrel Adair. Aged 87 years. Near the old Adair home there is a little lonely cabin where Tsi-ga-u Christie lives. She is past 90 years old, and refuses to leave her home. Her family was the Adairs, and it is here where she was born that she wishes to live out her days. The love of homeland to the Indian is hard to comprehend by the whiteman.