

September 10, 1909

Index side A, recording time 30 min.; interview time one hours.

Informant: John Topping, 80 years old, of Cherokee ancestry,
Oochelata, Washington County, Oklahoma.

Subject: Early days of the Oglesby-Hogshooter district of
central Washington County.

At one time what is now Washington County was populated by more than one tribe of Indians. The northern part of the area was all Delaware Indians. The Shawnees were scattered along the eastern side and Osages ranged along the western side. The southern area was inhabited by Cherokees. A few Creek Indians possibly were living in the southern edge as history records Creek Indian payments being made on Bird Creek north of Skiatook. This strip of land eleven miles wide and 40 miles long was not the kind of land, for the most part, that Indians preferred to live in. It did have on its big prairies some excellent hunting, but water and woodlands was not one of its widespread assets. When the land allotments were made few Indians, except for the Delawares, lived on their lands, preferring the eastern part of their Nation where more Indians lived and where the land was to their liking. Very few towns, streams, and other places have Indian names compared to districts where there were many Indians. Hogshooter community and creek were named for an Indian family that lived on the creek long ago. The village of Matoaka is believed to have been an Osage settlement at one time. The town of Oochelata was named for Chief Oochelata (Rev. Charles Thompson), but there is no record of him ever having lived there. Much of this county is high grass prairie land and most of it has never enjoyed any permanent settlement. At one time many areas of this country experienced oil booms, and it is recorded that the first oil well was located on Caney River where Bartlesville is now. In the early days the great prairie country of this district was a mecca for cattlemen, leasing Indian lands and bringing herds of cattle from other places.

On the high prairie in central Washington County is the little village of Oglesby. When a young fellow, John Topping came from what is now Nowata County with his parents to settle in this community and he has spent most of his life in this area.

John first tells about the old schools that came into being as the country was being settled. The first school that he recalls was the Reubin Tynes School on Caney River, then followed the schools at Oglesby, Fish Camp, Rice Creek, Hogshooter, Antioch, Steel Camp, and Pleasant Valley. To-day only the school at Oglesby remains in use.

The beginning of the little town of Oglesby may have been when Jess Oglesby set up a blacksmith shop before 1900 on the bank of Hogshooter Creek. Enough business from ranchers, cowboys, travelers and others supported the little shop for many years, and he finally sold out to a man by name of Crowder. About a quarter of a mile east of the creek an Indian by name of John Savage put in a store, and later the threat of high water caused the blacksmith shop to be moved up by it. Savage sold out to Sam Massengale who later traded the store to a Dr. Smith. As the town began to grow other stores were put in. An Indian couple by name of Roadacre had some allotted land adjoining the little town and they also put in a store. Roadacre also operated an undertaking parlor in connection with his mercantile business. With the cattle industry, some farming was being done along the creek and river bottoms, and later came the oil discovery. A branch of the Talala State Bank was established in Oglesby, with