

7-520
September 19, 1969

Index side B, second part, recording time 30 min.; interview time two hours.

Informant: Theodore Scott, 75-year-old Cherokee,
McLain Community, Muskogee County, Okla.

Subject: Some history of McLain country.

Near the elbow of Muskogee county is a little area whose history dates from the early beginnings of permanent settlement of Indian Territory. As a crow would fly it is hardly two miles to the Arkansas River. As seen to-day it is not a pretty country, but more a lonely place, few houses except in the little village of McLain, and terribly dusty when dry and equally trying when wet. The once fine timber has turned to patches of brush, cultivation farming is a thing of the past, and the rolling hill country seems to give an attitude of being tired and weary. Perhaps it all is taking a well earned rest from busier days.

At one time this area was thickly populated with the main pursuits being farming, livestock raising, and timber work. The Indian family of McLains had settled in this area in early days and operated a saw mill on Dirty Creek before the Civil War. Not far from the sawmill was the Taylor Stage Coach Inn. When it existed the Inn was a big two-story building built on the main road from Muskogee and the Three Forks Country to Webber Falls and the river crossing, and on to Ft. Smith. After the stage line closed so did the Inn and it eventually fell into disuse and final decay. Then it was that the village of McLain started and became a town. At one time there were three big general stores in operation, a grist mill, blacksmith shop, a drug store, Post Office, two doctor offices, Odd Fellows Hall, school, and a church. Just beyond the McLain area were other communities holding their own identity, such as Brewer Bend, Buckhorn, Herd, Elm Grove, Clinton, Sequoyah and Agnew each having a school, and some having a church also.

Here was the country that Theodore Scott was born in and has spent all his life here. Most of his early schooling was at the McLain school. His father had hoped he would get more education but he preferred to stay close to home and farm. His father graduated from the Cherokee Male Seminary in 1880.

Among the many prominent Indian families that used to live in this area were the Granams, Hildebrands, Ross, Lowreys, and Brewer. Tom Brewer was a representative of this district to the Cherokee Nation Council and was known as Chief Brewer.

There was a time when the main Creek thru McLain country was a beautiful clear tributary of water. Indian travelers and hunting parties camped along its banks, and settlers living in sod houses drank its good waters. Through the years many changes have come to this country and now the stream bears the somewhat repulsive name of Dirty Creek. It was thru this country long ago that Dr. Tom Scott and Dr. Albert Hair, both of whom had offices in McLain town, traveled by buggy or horseback to tend the sick and afflicted.

Prominent in the early days was the Woodard family of Cherokees. There were seven or eight of the brothers and sisters and they all had much land. It was on their place that the Taylor Stage Coach Inn was established possibly as early as 1850. In addition to providing overnight accommodations for travelers, a stable was kept for changing the stage coach teams for the journey on north or south.