

October 3, 1969

Index side B, recording time 23 minutes; interview time 1½ hours.

Informant: John Raincrow, 60-year-old Cherokee, of
Qualls Community, Cherokee County, Oklahoma.

Subject: Some history of Qualls Community

Perhaps for all of its existence the Community of Qualls has never enjoyed any large settlement or prosperity. Deep in the hills of southwest Cherokee County the noise of traffic and the hurrying world have had little effect on the peace the people of this little settlement have had. This area has been the home of the Raincrow family for as long as any of them can remember, and the original family settlers probably were of the Cherokees who were moved from Georgia and other areas of the east. John Raincrow was born near his present home and has been here all of his life.

The north-south boundary line of the Camp Gruber runs hardly a quarter of a mile to the west of what was Qualls' crossroads. That boundary line extends for five miles in both directions. That creation by the government back in the days of World War Two was probably the choke that strangled to death a community. A rectangle of fifty sections of land in Cherokee County alone were taken by the government for wartime activity moving out hundreds of families from the large area generally known as the Greenleaf Creek country. Probably never again will that large area know human habitation.

The early day families of the Cooksons, Carliles, Raincrows, Pettits, Sellers, Greenleaf, Watts, Sams, and Hickorys made up the bulk of the population. They all made their living by farming and stock raising. Timber work was not profitable as it was too far to haul wood products to market.

At one time John remembers there were two general stores, a cotton gin, post office, school, and a church that made up the village of Qualls. Qualls probably took its name from a family that lived there when the first post office was installed. Just a few years ago John lived to see the last of Qualls as a little town when the country store closed its doors. A quietness hangs over the little community now, no doubt in sharp contrast to a busier time long ago when Old man Joe Cookson was operating the cotton gin, Jensie Powers busy with her postmistress work, wagons bumped along the dusty roads bringing natives in to trade, and school children played at the big rock school house. Time too has silenced the church bell on the community church tower. By horseback or hack the mail no longer comes from Zeb. These are a few of the things that John has seen in his time. Another of the great changes he has witnessed was the disappearance of most of the families that he had known that lived in the area, particularly in the area that is now within the government reservation. In what would be the Qualls community now he can count the families on the fingers of his hands. At one time there were many little farms about the Qualls area, raising mostly corn, cotton, cane, and some wheat. Some hay was cut and put up for winter use