

T-541
November 3, 1969

Index side B, recording time 25 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Zek Reed, 76 years old. Of Cherokee ancestry.
Afton, Ottawa County, Okla.

Subject: Some history of Afton, Duncan Chapel, and surrounding area.

What is now the extreme southwest corner of Ottawa County and the northwest corner of Delaware County is the country that Zek has known most of his life.

His earliest recollections is of his home on Fly Creek. Near his home was a school known as Duncan Chapel, an early day subscription school. Land for the school had been given by the Cherokee family of Cornsilk. By comparison it was a large school. At one time Zek says there were 142 kids enrolled there. When he started to school there the teacher was Miss Lucy Neighbors, and later a Mr. Donelson was teacher. The road that went by the school was a part of the old Military Road, or sometimes known as the Texas Trail. After these many long years nothing remains of Duncan Chapel. The land has been fenced off in various size tracts, some to pastures, some to cultivation, and some left to grow up in brush and woods. It is in a patch of brush and woods where Duncan Chapel used to be. A short distance to the east of the old school site is the little Duncan Chapel Cemetery. Evidence of many of the graves has disappeared, but on one side is a little fenced plot of the Mouse Landrum family, and in another area are markers for several of the Cornsilk family. It is said that Mouse Landrum was the first person buried there, but there is no marker for his grave. The Cornsilk family lived just south of the school. He remembers Old Lady Cornsilk visiting his mother long ago and one time commented that someone had told her that a big tree in her yard was a chestnut tree, but it never bore any fruit. In later years Zek found out that the tree was just a big catalpa.

Country stores in the early days were few and far between. For the area in which the Reeds lived they would go to Ed Lundy's store over on Horse Creek, or over close to the river at a little settlement called Reedmore. At Lundy's there was also a blacksmith shop and a doctor's office. In about 1903 a cyclone came through and blew everything away at the Lundy place, and it was not rebuilt. Those who survived then went to Reedmore to start over again. At that same time the Cleora settlement was hit by the storm and it was partly blown away. In that same storm a singing was being held at a school house and the cyclone badly damaged the structure and hurt several people, but none killed. Strange things happen when cyclones strike, and he relates one instance. There was a shed at the schoolhouse where the people put their horses, leaving the wagons and buggies out in the yard. The storm blew the roof off the horse shed and never hurt one horse. All of the horses still had the harness on afterwards, except the hames on one horse were gone. Also a wagon was left sitting outside the schoolyard fence, and the storm picked up the wagon and placed it inside the fence upright without moving the spring seat or the neck yoke!