

T-553-4

February 4, 1970

Index side B, recording time 20 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Andy Thompson, 79-year-old Cherokee,
Pryor, Oklahoma

Subject: Row-Colcord country of Delaware County.

Andy Thompson was born just west of present Colcord in southern Delaware County, and spent his early boyhood there. After attending the Cherokee Male Seminary, he return to the family homestead and lived for many years. After reaching manhood he spent most of his productive years working in the oil fields in Oklahoma. He now lives in retirement at Pryor. During our visit he talks of many things, events, peoples and places of long ago.

Once in a while he returns to his old home on Beck Prairie to walk over the hills, relive many experiences of early days, visit his old family cemetery, and talk with the few old timers still there.

Andy's father knew the well-known personality of Indian Territory days, Ezekiel (Zeke) Proctor, and considered him a friend. My stories have been written about this colorful Cherokee, some telling of his activities as a lawman, and some recounting parts of his life on the other side of law and order. In fairness to Cherokee Proctor, no one but another Cherokee could pass judgment on him, for theirs is a way of life and outlook totally different from that of the whiteman. And therein came some of the problems and difficulties Zeke Proctor faced several times.

Zeke lived variously at Tahlequah, Christie, and up on Flint Creek. He traveled much and it seems to have been a rare occasion when he was not present at Indian meetings, or where there was shooting activity. Andy's father related that when Zeke lived at Tahlequah he got into a fight with another man, both having been drinking, and Zeke killed the man in a gun fight. Zeke fled to the hills. Soon U. S. Marshalls went hunting him, and to their sorrow found him. He killed one of them and went farther back into the hills. From that time on for several years he lived at different places in northeast Adair and southern Delaware County, and always carried his rifle and pistol. Mr. Thompson says it has been told to him that Zeke killed 23 people in his time. His is a long story, but it was written that he was the only Cherokee with whom the Government made a peace treaty. Apparently Zeke lived up to the treaty, and died a natural death. The inscription on his monument in Johnson Cemetery reads "Ezekiel Proctor 1831 - 1907 "As a husband devoted, as a father affectionate, as a friend kind and true.""

In Andy's memory the village of Flint, on Flint Creek near his home was perhaps the first settlement in that part of Indian Territory. There, the important attraction was the Hildebrand Mill. The old mill itself has had its own history. The first mill was washed away in a flood. The second mill burned. The present mill, three stories high still stands. The present owner, a decendent of the Beck family, long time settlers on Flint Creek, tells that it mill is still operative after over 70 years. The building