

T-572

April 9, 1970

Index side A, recording time 23 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Joseph Rogers, 70-year-old Delaware,
Dewey, Oklahoma

Subject: Delaware Indians of north Washington County

In the great movement of Indians in the nineteenth century the Delawares were not spared. Here to northern Washington^{County} came Chief Colonel Jackson and George Falleaf with their little band of some 260 Delawares, having been driven from their last, of many, place of refuge in Kansas. They settled along the Caney River, Cotton Creek, Hogshooter Creek, and in that general area of what is now Washington County north of Bartlesville. There were no trading posts in those early 1860s in Indian Territory of their area, and they still had to go back into Kansas for their necessities. Here these Delawares, of Washington County, again settled a wilderness land, made homes, cleared land for farming, and were well on their way to becoming again a people of contribution to their race. But, as in the history of most Indian tribes; in the 'discovery' of the New World by the English, Europeans beginning in the fifteenth century, the Indians of North America have never since escaped the plague brought by the foreigners, even unto this day. The end of any permanency of lands, homes, and their own nation forever ended when Oklahoma was formed as a state.

Today there is no Delaware Reservation, and the remaining members of the tribe are widely scattered thru Washington, Nowata, Craig, and Delaware counties. There is sadness in Joseph Rogers' eyes as he reflects on the long series of events that have reduced the great Delaware Nation from a most powerful people to the present handful of survivors.

Joseph Rogers was born near what is now Dewey, Oklahoma, and has spent all of his life in this area. When Dewey started as a town Joseph attended its first school. From that early day he has seen many of the events in the growth of the community as well as the changes that have affected his people. Dewey was born amid the oil boom of early days. Joseph recalls that one of its early men was Tom Mix, who later became famous as a western movie star. In the oil boom days, Tom Mix was the Town Marshall and dealt with all kinds of the rough element of society - Murderers, bootleggers, robbers, etc. Joseph remembers he always carried a pearl-handled pistol. Many times Tom Mix was a overnight guest at his family's home, as Mix and his father were close friends. Of the kind of lawmen of that early day, Joseph tells that one night Tom Mix went up on the balcony of the second floor of the town's hotel to stop a fight. One of the men came at him with a big knife and Mix sidestepped him and let him fall over the balcony railing. In memory of Dewey's famous citizen the town has built the Tom Mix Museum, which houses many of the man's belongings and momentos and artifacts of early day Dewey.

Joseph says that he has visions of some things that are to happen. He tells that one day he was laying on a cot after he came home from work, and looked up above the door and there was a huge letter with the name TOM MIX in glittering print. He called to his mother and sister to come see, but they did not see. But in a few minutes his niece came in and handed him a letter from his brother which told that Tom Mix had been killed in a car wreck.