T-572

April 10, 1970

Index side A, recording time 22 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Nola Jones Egnor, 71-year-old Cherokee,
White Oak, Craig County, Okla.

Subject: White Oak country.

From a hill a couple of miles away the little town of White Oak stands out prominently on the wide smooth prairie. Automobiles on U. S. Highway 66 race the Frisco trains by White Oak, none giving a glance or a thought that this was once a busy little town. But The town has changed over the years like most other places. There are no stores along the railroad like there once was. No depot exists now to accomodate passengers coming or going from this little town. The big hotel, livery barn, saddle and harness shop, blacksmith shop and the barber shop are just memories of another day. Nola Egnor has witnessed the many changes that have come to the place of her birth. Dr. Amos Haynes was the town doctor in the old days and saw Nola safely into this world.

The main street of White Oak runs west at a right angle to the highway and railroad. A Cherokee by name of Oliver Haynes has the only store in town which he has operated for seventy years. Except for the half dozen houses Main Street seems deserted. Where the Main Street dead ends Mrs. Egnor has lived in her little home for many years. Her attachment comes naturally in her love for White Oak, for her father, Theo Jones, and a Delaware Indian by name of Tom Brown are credited with laying out the town when it started.

In the early days nearly all of the people of this part of Craig County were either Cherokees or Shawnees. To the southwest a mile or so begins the Shawnee Hills where a large settlement of Shawnees lived at one time. Joining the Shawnee Hills on the west was the Delaware settlement where Chief Journeycake brought his little band of Indians in the 1870s. To the east, north and south were the settlements and lands of the Cherokees. Members of the three tribes lived for many years as Indians without drawing any line as to tribe affiliation. Many intermarried, attended each others meetings and stomp dances, church functions, and shared the same burial grounds. The coming of statehood killed that happy and convenient way of life, for it broke up communities, scattered families, and brought on the ravages of whiteman invasion.

The little village of White Oak has many senior citizens who enjoy living here, undisturbed by the rush, noise and pollution attendant to the larger towns and cities. Here they enjoy old friends and neighbors, tend their gardens and flower beds, and busy themselves with their particular interest. Mrs. Egnor lives alone, but her days are filled with activity. Her flower gardens and greenhouse are a joy to see. In her home she has many old pieces of furniture, artifacts, and items kept thru the years, many of which the present generation has never seen or heard about. From her father's old store of some sixty years ago she has kept a pickle digger, tobacco cutter, husking peg, and an apple corer. A pair of brass topped hames adorn a place on her wall as a decorator, and these hames were used by her father. She shows many old pictures taken sixty to eighty years ago, of people and activity in the early day country of White Oak.