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Recording time: 30 minutes

September 26, 1968

Informant:

Jack Whitmire, 80-years old, of Cherokee ancestry,
Tyner Creek Community, Proctor, Adair County, Okla.

Subject:

Jack Whitmire, the son of Johnson Whitmire, was born in Tyner Creek Valley, and has lived in this one community all of his life. His father was also born in Adair County and spent all of his life in this area. The family followed farming and cattle raising, and some timber work.

The Whitmire farm is about four miles north of the town of Proctor. The farm land lays along the Clear Spring-fed Creek in the pleasant and fertile valley.

The town of Proctor was named for Zeke Proctor, an early full-blood Cherokee, about 1890. At the height of its growth Proctor was a prosperous trading center. It had a large cotton gin, several stores, blacksmith and wagon shop, and sawmill. At one time the Frisco railroad ran thru the town from Arkansas to Tahlequah.

Farming and cattle raising has always been the principal means of the community livelihood. However, before statehood there was a period when timber cutting was the big industry. This industry brought in the railroad, and when the timber was gone the railroad was removed. Mr. Whitmire recalls the fine timber of the area - logs were so big that only one log could be hauled on a logging wagon. As a timber area, it has never recovered the heavy cutting of that day. Pine and the hardwoods were first cut for rail ties and lumber, later any tree large enough for sawing was taken.

The first school of the area that he remembers was the Clear Fork School located about seven miles north of the present town of Proctor, and there he received all of his schooling. Later, he recalls that a school was built in Proctor.

Mr. Whitmire does not recall any early day church houses, but does recall going to the school house to hear circuit riding preachers at Clear Fork and at Proctor.

He remembers going with his father to the Going Snake Court House of Indian Territory days. The Court House was located at Strawberry Springs about five miles west of the present town of Westville. This was one of the principal meeting places for the district to conduct business, hold court, and serve justice as required. The old building has long since been removed.