

October 22, 1968

Index side A. Recording time: 25 minutes

Informant: Owen Grant, 84-year-old Cherokee,
Stillwell, Oklahoma

Subject: Owen Grant was born in 1884 on Cowskin Prairie near what is now the town of Grove, Oklahoma. He is the son of Henry Grant and Martha Hicks, both pioneers of Cherokee ancestry. He spent his early boyhood on Cowskin Prairie. The family moved to Flint District of Indian Territory and settled in Stillwell, about 1896.

He recalls that his first school was an unnamed school on the outskirts of Stillwell on the Bill Gott place. This location is now the site of New Hope Cemetery. Following some years of schooling in the Stillwell area, he went to the Cherokee Male Seminary at Tanlequan. After graduation from the Seminary he entered the teaching field.

In 1902 Mr. Grant taught at the old Nickliff School near Kenwood which was an all-Indian school. This school was then about 9 miles up Saline Creek from Salina. At that time he was staying with a sister whose land allotment was located about 10 miles south of Vinita. While teaching at Nickliff he boarded with an Indian family by name of John Grass on Saline Creek. On weekends he would ride horseback to his sister's home south of Vinita, going across country by way of Spavinaw, crossing Grand River at Clark Ford, then on across Greenbrier Prairie.

During this time he was acquainted with John Nickliff, a prominent Cherokee in the country. John's three sons, John, Charley, and Tom had earlier had some trouble with the U. S. Marshalls. It seems the Marshalls had tried to arrest the boys on suspicion of having whiskey, but did not find them at home. The marshalls pistol whipped the parents in an attempt to get them to tell where the boys were. When the brothers learned of this they went after the marshalls and killed one Henry Vier of Vinita. From that time on until after statehood the boys were considered outlaws, but never caught. During one encounter a Marshall by the name of Isabelle got shot in the heel. After statehood the father talked the brothers John and Charley into going to Tanlequan and giving up. They served a while in the penitentiary. Tom disappeared before that and was believed to have gone to Old Mexico, and was never heard of again.