

January 13, 1969

T-370

Index side ^B2, second part, recording time 15 min.; interview time 2½ hours.

Informant: Thomas Scraper, 80-year-old Cherokee,
Miami, Ottawa County, Oklahoma

Subject: Thomas Scraper was born in 1888 on Elm River in the northern part of the Delaware District of the Cherokee Nation. Both of his parents were full-blood Cherokees, his father was Ben Scraper and his mother was Ella Cheater. Mr. Scraper lived at different places on Elm River, Whitewater Creek, and along Honey Creek. He and his father were successful farmers, but at the age of 22 he left his home to learn the plumbing trade. First going to work in Texas, and later coming to Miami in the 1930s where he continued his trade until he retired. He now quietly and peacefully enjoys his autumn years in his little home, visiting his Indian friends and fishing in the Neosho River a few blocks from his home.

He spent some time attending the Peters Prairie School and the Butler School in the Elm River country. Later he went to the Cherokee Male Seminary.

Although Thomas recalls going with his father to the Delaware District Courthouse known as Saline, there was another Indian courthouse in this same district between Zena and Grove he knew as Council Hollow Courthouse. In this large frame building Indian matters pertaining to land and claims, trials and legal matters, and other business of that day took place. No physical evidence remains to-day of this once busy Indian meeting place, its location would be on the east part of Sec. 19, Range 23, T24 of Delaware County.

At one time He says the Seneca Indian village of Cayuga was on Elm River, but was later moved up on Honey Creek. Honey Creek and the area north was in the Seneca country. Whatever the reason, and it has yet to be voiced, the Cherokees admit knowing very little of the Senecas and other small tribes originally moved into the extreme northeast part of the Cherokee Nation. Perhaps their numbers are so small, and each tribe has been busy with troubles of their own.

Mr. Scraper remembers many of the Indian burial grounds used in his younger days in this part of the Delaware District. Some of them are Snell Cem., Butler Cem., Fields, Cem. Polson Cem., Peters Prairie Cem., and Cheater Cem.

He remembers when Dodge and Southwest City were the only trading posts of the area. He saw Grove grow from a little store at a spring on Honey Creek. He also saw the town of Jay grow to become the county seat of Delaware County. For reasons he does not recall a serious fight almost broke out on the location of Jay. Originally one faction wanted it on the hill about a mile northeast of its present location. One group led by Sam Boney bitterly contested the alternate site; but an agreement was reached and guns were put away.