

February 20, 1969

T-378

Index side A, first part, recording time 10 minutes.

Informant: Frank Warren, 77-year-old Cherokee,  
Peggs, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: Frank was born and raised in Cherokee County and is well informed about its places and people. His wife is Molly Shade, a full-blood Cherokee also born and raised near Peggs.

Close to the Cherokees is the memory of their relatives and friends who have passed on, and they talk about the old Indian burial places they know about, in their part of the country. Some of these old graveyards are the Swimmer, New Hope, Redbird, Downing, and Terrapin that are located in their home area.

There are many instances where the Indians just buried their dead in some convenient place near their home and frequently without any marker. Frank speaks of one case at Fite Thompsons where there were four or five people buried under the front porch.

He recalls one time when he lived down on Blackbird Creek, there was an old Indian by name of John Hicks came to see them. He was carrying a witching rod and got him and his brother to go visit an old grave nearby. It was believed to be the grave of Dankel Redbird and this old Indian had reason that some money was buried with him. When they got to the grave, John employed his witching rod and each time he came by a certain spot near the grave the rod would dip. The old man said he would be back later and wanted the boys to help him dig for the money. Some while later he returned carrying his rod and a rifle. Frank and his brother went with him that night and dug a big hole down beside the grave. They rebelled then when the old man wanted them to dig sideways into the grave, and filled the hole back up. A while after that they noticed that someone had been back to the grave and reopened it. Whether or not any money was found was never known. Sometime later this John Hicks and another Indian by name of Charley Hutchins went down on Spring Creek looking for another grave near where the old Negro Seminary was. They found the grave they were looking for and agreed to come back on a certain date a month later and dig. On the appointed time Hicks came to Hutchins home but learned he had moved out of the country, so Hicks went on to the grave himself. When he got there he found that the grave had been dug into and an iron kettle was laying on top of the ground. It is said that there were stain spots inside the kettle indicating that gold and silver coins had been in it. Just what became of Charley Hutchins was never known, but he never returned to his home.

When Frank was a young man he and an older brother started a blacksmith shop in Peggs. Frank was just learning the trade when one day his brother came by to tell him he was quitting the trade to go into some other business, and gave Frank the shop to go it by himself. Frank tells of the hard time he had learning the smithy trade by himself, but he did learn and made a living for a while. One of his first jobs by himself was shoeing a pair of outlaw mules which other horseshoers had refused to work on. After ten years times got hard and people did not have any money so he closed up the shop, and went to look for some other way to make a living.