

February 28, 1969

T-379

Index side A, part three, recording time 12 min. Interview time 1½ hours.

Informant: Katie Sam, 62-year-old full blood Cherokee, of Lowrey Prairie, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: Katie is the daughter of Watt Sam and Mary Proctor Sam, and was born on Greenleaf Creek in Muskogee County. Theirs was a humble home, but they enjoyed untold wealth in being near a clear sparkling stream, having some rich farm land in the valley, and protected by the beautiful hills. She likes to remember this wonderful part of her life when she was a little girl. Her father had worked hard to provide a comfortable home, and farmed his valley acres well to make a living for the family.

It would seem that the Cherokees were not destined to enjoy anything for long on this earth. Again, the oft told story, here comes the whiteman to wipe out ones lifetime of scratching and scraping to build a little home, the endless hours of clearing and claiming a few acres of land to farm; and the attachment to a home and land the family had become to love so well. In one heartless greedy fell swoop a government condemned the farms and homes in beautiful Greenleaf Valley to build Greenleaf Lake. The Indians were paid a meager pittance for their years of hard work that went into building their home and farm land. This little 'trail of tears' forced these many Cherokee families to seek a home some other place. The Sam family relocated on a little piece of flint rock land near Cookson, but Mr. Sam was getting too old to again try to build up a home and farm again. Yet even so, they could not escape the onslaught of the whiteman, for here that hoard came again with their Tenkiller Dam and Lake, and the Cookson Hills Game Refuge. The whiteman just cannot understand that the Indian does not want to be crowded, or have his homeland torn up, or his way of life disturbed. The invasion and contamination that started three or four hundred years ago knows no end. Watt and Mary Sam died in the Cookson Hills with sad and heavy hearts believing that the future held little for the unification and way of life so hoped for by the Cherokees.

Katie lived with relatives for a while and attended a school near Cookson. An opportunity came for her to go away to an Indian school, and she went to Chilocco Indian School far away from her homeland. For this opportunity she has been grateful. She stayed at Chilocco and graduated with the Class of 1930.

Katie was employed at different places after finishing her schooling, but after a few years her health failed and she entered a sanitorium. Her recovery was good and she went to live with an aunt on Lowrey Prairie in northern Cherokee County and has been here for many years. Her aunt passed away a few years ago and Katie lives in her humble and comfortable home far removed from the space age confusion. Katie enjoys living alone at her home well hidden in the woodland adjoining the Prairie.