T-377

February 18, 1969

Index side B, second part, recording time 25 minutes.

Informant: Frank Casto, and May Hilderbrand Casto, 82- and 81-year old Cherokees of Whiteoak Community, Craig County, Okla.

Subject: The Castos and Hilderbrands were among the early Indian families who settled along Pawpaw Creek in the Whiteoak and Timpson Chapel country of Craig County. Frank Casto and his wife May have lived all of their lives on land their parents and grandparents cleared and settled when the Cherokees first begin coming to the Indian Territory.

These kindly people have been connected with Timpson Chapel for over 70 years and have seen and known many of those hardy Indians of yesteryear who lived and died in this community. At the beginning of this visit the Castos talk of the old Timpson church. Its beginning started in a log building early in the 1880s and continued as an organized church until about 1930, when the Methodists discontinued services there. Since that time it has served as a community center. The Rev. B. J. Hilderbrand, a full-blood Cherokee was a preacher at the church in the early 1890s, as were other Indian preachers such as Re. E. R. Hendricks and Rev. J. B. Butler. Rev. Hilderbrand is the father of May Casto. The Castos have in their possession the Timpson Chapel Church Register dating before 1890. It contains membership lists, births, marriages, and deaths. Rev. Bear Timpson, a full blood Cherokee was a leader in the community in the 1880s and 1890s. Because of old age he quit preaching about 1890, but the church register does contain an entry where he performed the marriage ceremony for Wash Dick and Sarah North, both Shawnees, on Aug. 9, 1891. This is the last church record of Rev. Timpson, and he died Dec. 25, 1898 at about 80 yrs. of age.

In the day of their youth nearly all of the people of this large area were Indians, Cherokees mostly, but some Shawnees and a few Delawares. In looking at the old records of 70 and 80 years ago. some of the Indian families of the area were the Oskisons, Woodalls, Sequitche, Downing, Boudinot, Redbird, Chalote, Mixwater, Franklin, Squirrel, Duck, Longtail, Buzzard, and others. It was John, of the Oskisons who gained fame as a writer. Among his many successes was "Brothers Three" a personal account of his family in Indian Territory days, in which many of these same people are mentioned.

Mrs. Casto was the daughter of Benjamin Hilderbrand and Mary Fallin both fullblood Cherokees. She tells that there was a church record of the area for the period dating before that of the book she now has that her mother kept. But when her parents home burned in the late 1890s the first book was destroyed.