

March 24, 1969

Index side A, third part, recording time 5 min.
Index side B, first part, recording time 10 min.

Informant: Daniel Downing, 79-year-old Cherokee, of
Chouteau, Mayes County, Oklahoma

Subject: Mr. Downing comes from one of the largest of Cherokee families, and have scattered throughout a wide area. Such is the case of Daniel Downing, who was born in the Tahlequah area and spent his boyhood in Cherokee County. He has traveled extensively, as well as having served in World War I overseas. Before his retirement he worked in Tulsa for thirty years. His father was Alex Downing who came from the Double Springs community of Cherokee County. His mother was from the Blair family in the Lost City country. Among other places, Daniel has worked and lived in the Hulbert area many years.

He speaks of the Keener family, who were many in number and seemed to have originally established themselves in the Lost City and Fourteen Mile Creek area of the old Cherokee Nation. One of the original Indian burial grounds of the area was known as the Keener Cemetery, but was abandoned fifty or more years ago, and which was located about five miles northwest of Lost City. The Cherokees then established the New Keener Cemetery at the Keener Indian Church $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Lost City, which is in use to-day.

Daniel also lived for a while at Double Springs, the original home of his father. At one time many Cherokees lived in this community. One of the first schools Daniel attended was at Double Springs which was known as Hog Eye School. The name came from a big knot in the lintel log over the door of the school, which apparently resembled the eye of a hog.

In mentioning the old schools, about a mile on up Double Springs creek, where it headed, Daniel recalls the old Negro Seminary. This institution was part of the educational program of the Cherokee Nation before statehood. He describes it as having been located on a tract of ground above a large spring with beautiful well-kept grounds, buildings, gardens, and orchards. The main building was a three-story brick structure. He says this was also known as the Negro High School, and the average attendance was from fifty to sixty children coming from all parts of the Cherokee Nation. Often the school would be the meeting place for revival meetings and Indians, Negroes, and whites alike would attend these big meetings held on the school grounds. Daniel does not know just when the school was built but says, to the best of his knowledge, it was closed down when statehood fell upon the Cherokee Nation. Thereafter, it was used intermittently by Negro organizations until it burned about 1912. To-day nothing remains to mark this historic place. Represented at the school were children from such well-known Negro families as Ross, Vann, Pack, Hammer, and Still, whose forebears came with the Cherokees in the Removal Period.

Movement of families established by the pioneers along Double Springs community has not been affected by the progress of time. Decendents of those original families still living here are the Grees, Grits, Triplett, Dry, Whitekiller, Swimmer, Crittenden, Neugin, and Grasshopper, and many more whose names he does not recall at this time.