

T-431

May 14, 1969

Index side A, recording time 25 minutes, interview time two hours.

Informant: Sam Chewey, 82-year-old full blood Cherokee,
Crittenden Community, Adair County, Oklahoma

Subject: As I arrive at Mr. Chewey's home far up in the hollow, he is busy killing a six-foot blacksnake that was in his chickenhouse. This job finished he returned to his chair out under a big oak tree. Several grandchildren and great-grand children ran and played around the yard. He invited me to come and sit a while, and drug up the remains of a chair. After shooing some dogs out of the way and removing a tick from his arm, he relaxed in complete comfort.

He begins to recall the olden days he remembers when guns were a part of a man's dress. In this northern part of the old Goingsnake District of the Cherokee Nation, Cherokee life was little different from the other areas. The people scratched a living out of the land they had cleared, fished in the bountiful Illinois River, hunted in the hills, and raised their families.

Sam was the son of William Chewey and Martha Acorn Chewey, and the grandson of Joseph Chewey who helped settle the Chewey district. Sam points to the bluff on the west side of the river where he was born in a log house. It is in this country he has spent nearly all of his life. He is the last living member of his family. His brothers and sisters, Henry, Ruth, Mary, Luella, Evelene, and William Chewey are all gone now.

He remembers being at the Goingsnake District Courthouse at Strawberry Springs when Rufus Walkingstick was the Judge there. Frank Boney and Tom Long were two of the Cherokee Marshalls he remembers that worked in the Goingsnake District. In those early days he says there were good times and bad times. Ill feelings stemming from removal days, invasion of white men, distrust of government actions caused many Indians to settle differences the hard way. Many good Indians died, and many others suffered at the whipping tree and the hanging tree.

He tells that one time his father and another Indian were at the store at Oaks, when a couple of white man tried to run them off, just because they were Indians. The whitemen had run others off but his father would not run and a gun fight followed. His father killed one of the men, and he was cleared of the killing charge.

When he was a boy, he recalls that there was a little log school house above the river about where the bridge crosses now. The school did not have a name as far as he knew. While he attended there only full-blood Cherokees were the teachers. He remembers that Joseph Hummingbird was the teacher there for most of his attendance.