

T-431

May 16, 1969

Index side A, recording time, 13 minutes. Index side B, recording time 45 minutes. Interview time three hours.

Informant: Tom Rider, 91-year-old Cherokee,
Hulbert, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: Until a few years ago, Mr. Rider had spent nearly all of his life in the community of Zeb. Zeb is a little settlement in the east central part of Cherokee County. His father, William Rider, a full-blood Cherokee and a Civil War veteran came from Blue Springs, Georgia when the Cherokees were forced out of the eastern states. William Rider came to Indian Territory and settled in the Zeb community.

Tom remembers when the nearest neighbor was seven miles away. As the country began to be settled other Indians came there to make their home. Some of them were Holland, Johnson, Downing, Woodall, Martin, and Lowrey. He says in those days white people were not allowed to come into the Cherokee to live without a permit from the Chief.

He seems outspoken in regard to where he was born. In filing for his old age assistance at the Tahlequah office, he was asked where he was born and if he was a citizen of the U. S. He told them "No." He said he was born in the Cherokee Nation before it was a part of the United States, and it would still be the Cherokee Nation if the ---- white people had not come in and took it away from the Indians. He told them that "now he feels like a man without a country". He feels that the white people should better inform themselves about the history of eastern Oklahoma and the Indian Nations.

The community where Mr. Rider grew up did not go by any name until a post office was established in the store run by old man McCary. In selecting a name for the post office, several names were suggested. Old man Bowlin told them the government wanted a short and simple name and he suggested "Zeb", which was agreed on. Whether or not an old white mule belonging to Bowlin whose name was also "Zeb", prompted the selection, is not known.

The Rider family gave the land where the Rider school building is now located. Like many other country schools, Rider School has been closed, so that the children can be hauled by bus to the city schools. Before the original Rider School was built, the Rider church stood on the grounds. Tom remembers that the first teachers there were Mary Dennenburg and Jewel McCollough, both part Indians. Also Julia Martin, Deedee Neeley, and Carrie Goodman were teachers there in the early days.

Like much of the other parts of the Indian Territory of the olden days, the people made their living raising cattle, hogs, and horses, and farming the cleared patches of land. Tom's father was a successful and prominent livestockman. William Rider was also a cattle buyer for other cattlemen, as well as for his own interests. He spoke both