

May 22, 1969

Index side A, recording time 20 minutes, interview time one hour.

Informant: Jerr Davis, 83-year-old Cherokee, Tailholt  
Community, Cherokee County, Oklahoma

Subject: High upon the ridge above the clear waters of Caney Creek is the little community of Tailholt. No one can remember how long a little country store has been in business, but the dust of many years rises and settles about the store and the few houses to-day as it did before Oklahoma became a state. The community has been home to many.

At the beginning of the Cherokee Nation in 1839, the Eagle family were some of the first to settle along Caney Creek and in the country we know now as Wauhatchie. The Keys family were also among the Cherokees who came to this wilderness from Georgia in 1839, and a stone from their original home fireplace is preserved and inscribed "From the Keys Home, built in 1841". Around the Keys home was built one of the first trading posts in the new Cherokee Nation. Built by the Keys family, the store settlement took its name from the Cherokee Eagle family (in Cherokee the word for Eagle is wa-hi-la). Tailholt is such a close neighbor, both locations are almost spoken of as one area.

Of this country the Sanders were perhaps the most numerous and many of them quite prominent in Cherokee affairs. John M., George O., and Sam Sanders held high positions in the Cherokee government. Some were not so bent as was Little George who had a mean streak and would fight at the least provocation. His bent also led to his undoing, as one day he took a dislike for his brother-in-law and came gunning for him. This was Little George's undoing, as he was buried the next day. The taxpayers of that day were spared many of the expenses of court trials, sheriff's travel, etc. as many time settlement of arguments and differences was simple and quick. Such was the case at Tailholt in its early days when Nick Sanders and George Christie squared away in the middle of that same dusty road. Nick was not so lucky as seven men went to the Sanders family cemetery nearby and only six came back. On one of those early days Wooley Jim took offense at Sam Groundhog carrying off his jug of whiskey, and so tracked him down and shot him dead. Thereupon, he retrieved his jug and went about his affairs. One night several of the community gathered at the log school house for a party and dance. Though a social error on the part of the Entertainment Committee, Watt Vann was not invited. Watt felt that his presence was not desired and went to the party in a foul mood with the intention of breaking up the social affair. He barged into the middle of the festivities and made known his intentions. He was promptly thrown out