

T-476

June 12, 1969

Index side A, recording time 45 minutes; interview time two hours.

Informant: Amos Christie, 62-year-old Cherokee, Bidding Springs Community, Adair County, Oklahoma.

Subject: The original part of the large log house that Amos Christie lives in was built by his grandfather, Watt Christie before the Civil War. In this humble place many Christies have been brought into the world, many more have lived all their lives here, and some have passed to the spirit world here.

Watt Christie came to the Indian Territory in 1839, not by choice but by force. Many of the Christie family survived the tragic mid-winter trip to settle in the Bidding Springs area. For whatever comfort it was, the Cherokees were for a short time rid of the whiteman. Whatever griefs, hatreds, or feelings the Cherokees had in the first years at their new home in the west were overshadowed by efforts to just make a living and claw a place to live out of the flint rock covered wilderness. The Christies did chop out of the woodlands a few little fields as a start to improve their lot. The axe was no stranger to the Indians and they quickly built log houses and barns. Many believed that this was their last chance for existence and built sturdy homes. The home that was started by Watt Christie, and later added more log rooms, testify to their hopes. In the adjoining valleys the Vanns, Polles, Adairs, Eagles, Squirrels, Sanders, and other families were recovering from one of the worst tragedies ever to befall a nation of people. The Christies grew and prospered and at one time a large area of the land around their homes was theirs.

Goback Christie, son of Watt, lived out his 84 years and is buried in the woods back of his home. This little family cemetery is almost unrecognizable, but here several of the Christie family are at rest. Goback Christie is probably one of the best known and most loved of all the Cherokees of his time. This full-blood Cherokee has little book learning, but he was naturally gifted in many crafts. He was considered a master blacksmith and could repair anything from a wagon to a watch. Many old timers tell of his ability to match broken knife blades perfectly with those from a factory. His arrow points and fish gigs were works of art. Working with a home-made forge and the very simple of tools whatever remains today of his making also stand as a monument to this good Indian. There are many old timers who are still living who knew this man, and tell of his exceptional abilities as a carpenter, stone mason, and naturalist. Goback was highly respected for his knowledge of the medicinal plants of the woods and streams and his ability to effectively use them. He has been known to set successfully a compound fracture of the thigh. These are a few of the things revealed about Amos' father.