

August 21, 1969

Index side B, recording time 2 minutes; interview time 1 hour.

Informant: Lizzie Norman, 73-year-old full blood Cherokee, Sand Fork Community, Adair County, Okla.

Subject: By-to-day's measure the Bearpaw home is far removed from the speed and hurry of 1969. Miles back in the hill country, with few neighbors, these people live a happy and contented life. Typical of the homes built long ago, theirs too reflects the taste of three-quarters of a century or more ago. The kitchen and eating area in one section, and the living and sleeping rooms in another, under one roof and joined with a breezeway. The breezeway serves many purposes. Here the hunting dogs get in out of the rain or hot sun, a hen finds an empty box suitable for a nest and to lay her egg, sparrows sit up on the ceiling joists and chirp contentedly, and the chairs and benches provide sufficient comfort for visitors or for quiet sitting.

Lizzie Norman was born 73 years ago and has lived here ever since. Her father was William Switzer, who had served in the Civil War. Her mother was Lucy Whitelett, who came from the Ah-ko-li-ti family.

Of course the breezeway of their home looks out across a clearing, the edge of which is a Whitelett mound in the long distance. In the foreground, the rocky hills are low and the view is thick with trees and brush.

Just to the left of the house is the Switzer family, and to the right are the Whiteletts, in all seasons. Most of them are still living and live on the old Bearpaw land as before. I don't know of any other locations for miles, no one lives. This is a very old and very quiet place. The only thing that is a part of the land, but to a city dweller it would seem a rather remote and perhaps a very old still life scene.

When one goes to the clearing and looks out on the field and the hills, the view is a picture of a peaceful life. The ground is very good ground, for here many animals live, and the land is very good, for here many people are at rest. There is no noise to be heard, for there is no returning to the place from which they came. There is a happy sound of life in the air, which one can find if one goes to and around.

Still, even though I am a visitor, the family have a variety of live stock, chickens, and other little bits of culture. The trees and brush will grow and take root on their own, and at the same time have had their own soil.