

September 29, 1969

Index side A, second part, recording time 25 min; interview time one hour. (First part of recording attempted while walking thru flint rocks - not good.)

Informant: Phillip Osage, 70-year-old Cherokee,
Iron Post Community, Cherokee County, Okla.

Subject: Spring Creek country.

One of the most beautiful of streams in eastern Oklahoma is Spring Creek. Together with its sister tributary, Snake Creek, these two streams have been home to Indians since the beginning of the Indian Nation. Winding thru three counties much of the events and history of this part of the Indian Territory are secretly kept by these creations of nature. Peggs, Lowrey, and Rowe Prairies are closely connected with these creeks, and it is this country that Phillip Osage, a full-blood Cherokee, has known all of his life. Born on Peggs Prairie, the son of George Osage and Nancy Smallwood Osage, Phillip now lives up near the head of Hummingbird Hollow.

At the beginning of this visit, Phillip takes me to see the old Cloud family graveyard. We walk up thru the woods and dry creek bed, and the sharp clink of flint rocks under foot breaks the otherwise solemn silence. He speaks occasionally about the things familiar to him. He stops under an oak tree to examine some acorns and comments on the prospect that the squirrels will have sufficient for the winter. He pulls a leaf off of a plant known to the Indians as 'carpenter's square' and chews on it. A most unusual plant in that the stem is nearly perfectly square its entire length. Off to the side of the creek bed there is a grove of persimmon trees which we go by. He smiles while looking at the unusually large wild fruit, for come frost he will gather these for the table. He tells also that the wood of the persimmon tree is good for cookstove or fireplace, and its lumber is also a white, hard and durable board. However, it is not often that a tree of this kind can be found that is large enough to sawlog.

The land at the end of the hollow is now owned by a whiteman, who has built a new house and heavily fenced his holdings. Phillip does not know much about him as he is non-communicative, and is also the only non-Indian in the area. It seems little effort is lost by either white or Indian as neither strain to weld any social activity. In a little clearing on the whiteman's place we come to what used to be the little Cloud cemetery. It is not known how many graves were there, but he remembers some eight or ten. In about the middle of the burial place is the stump of a tree that was cut long ago. Resting on top of the stump is the only grave marker we could find. It is inscribed "Lizzie Cloud born Sept. 9, 1839 died Sept. 5, 1904 Aged 65 years". For some reason the engraver did not put the "0" in the year "1904" on this marble monument. The closely grazed and levelness of what used to be a cemetery attest to many years that cattle have been pastured here. Lizzie's husband, Cricket Cloud may have been buried here too, but no one knows for sure. The Crickets were the grandparents of Phillip's wife. Lizzie's first husband was a Rowe, but her maiden name was never known. Up against a hill nearby is a nice spring, but a padlocked concrete building now hides it. We lay down on the ground to get a drink from the little stream that flowed from under the well-house.