

T-541

November 6, 1969

Index side B, recording time 20 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: George Houston, 75-year-old Cherokee,
Taylor Ferry, Wagoner County, Oklahoma

Subject: Some history of Gideon, and Cherokee County.

George Houston lives in retirement at the site of the old Taylor Ferry crossing of Grand River, a part of the country he has known all his life. The son of Sequoyah Houston, George was born and raised in the little settlement of Gideon on Fourteenmile Creek in Cherokee County.

Across the creek north of Gideon and upon the side of a hill is ~~the~~ a little fenced grave plot. Here Sequoyah Houston is buried, and also his father, Teesee Houston. Sequoyah Houston was a deputy with the Cherokee Nation Sheriff and the lawmen were on the trail of a gang of outlaws consisting of Cherokee Bill, Bill and Jim Cook, Jeff Cochran and Jim French. On that day in June 1894 the two factions met, and Sequoyah Houston was killed. He was 32 years old and left a widow with three children. George, and his brother Mack, keep the grave of their father clean and maintained all the time.

The Houston brothers associate the tragedy with the Black Snow of Jan. 1895. In recalling the story, the outlaws were holed up at the Half-way House between Ft. Gibson and Tahlequah waiting for their go-betweens to get their share of the Cherokee Strip payment being made at Tahlequah which amounted to \$265.70. It was there that the lawmen and the outlaws had their gun battle in which their father was killed and Jim Cook was wounded. A year later Bill and Jim Cook were killed while robbing the depot at Catoosa. Later Cherokee Bill was hung at Ft. Smith. He does not recall what became of Cochran and French. Bill McKey was one of the lawmen, the last to pass away, and Houston was pallbearer at his funeral.

Blue Springs, as Gideon was originally known, remained the home of the Houstons for many years, and George has seen many of the happenings and changes that have come to that little part of the Cherokee Nation.

With his father in the posse that fateful day were Ellis Rattlingourd, Dick and Zeke Crittenden, Bill Nichols, Isaac Greese, Hicks, Brackett, and Bill McKey.

The Strip Payment in Tahlequah was the biggest event that had come to the Capitol and many people had gathered there. The payment money was hauled by wagon from Ft. Gibson in trunks, with many guards along with the train. The payments were made at the district courthouse which was a frame building that stood where the Carnegie Library is now located. During the payment guards were stationed every ten steps around the courthouse.