

T-555

March 10, 1970

Index side B, first part, recording time 12 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Robert Walker, 35-year-old Cherokee,  
Hogan Community, Mayes County, Okla.

Subject: Murphy country, and surrounding area.

Before the coming of the man-made lakes, power dams; federal highways, statehood and other things, the Murphy country was all Indian. A more beautiful and peaceful country would have been hard to find. Spring Creek and Snake Creek provided all that could be desired in clear pure water, and Grand River and its fertile valley all helping to ease the great hurt and sorrow of the Cherokees after they were forcibly moved from the native lands in the east. In the valleys, on the rugged hills, and across the flatland prairie spots many Cherokees lived in Indian Territory days. Just a few of the Indian families that used to live in this country were the Teehee, Balley, Panther, Waven, Youngduck, Cloud, Downing, Brewer, Adair, Cochran, Chawayuca, Still, Key, Treasure, Ketcher, Bolin, Vann, Mayes, Thompson, and Johnson.

It was from Spring Creek of this area that Lewis Downing came to lead the Cherokees from 1867 to 1872 as Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. As Chief, he was also known as "Rev. Downing", a Baptist minister. Lewis Downing also served in the Civil War, and upon his discharge he held the rank of Colonel. Chief Downing lived out his life at his home on Spring Creek and died in 1872. He was buried at the old Ned Adair Cemetery. When Ft. Gibson Lake was formed, the Ned Adair Cemetery, along with some others, was moved up on the mountain some two miles east. It is believed that there was a monument to his memory in the old location, but what the government did with it is not known, for at his present grave in the new Ned Adair Cemetery only a little concrete block of the standard government design has only the name "Downing" on it.

Not the least of the early settlers in the Murphy country was Ned Adair. Mr. Adair had one of the finest homes and farms in the Grand river bottoms by the town of Murphy in Indian Territory days. He contributed much to getting schools started for the Indian children, supporting Indian churches, and contributing to the welfare of his fellowman.

This is the country and some of the people that Robert Walker has known about all his life. He was born up on the flatlands northeast of Murphy and has spent all his life in this area. Robert learned the carpenter trade from his father and has been very successful, proving a good living and home for his family. His father was John Walker, and his mother came from the Bean family, both of Cherokee ancestry. At one time his grandparents owned about a section of land in the Murphy country, which included some of their Indian allotments.

Robert mentions that when his grandfather died, among his belongings was