

In the days before statehood, he tells that a person could go and settle on any piece of land not claimed by someone else. When his family moved there from Sequoyah County, they settled on some land at the south edge of Sunnyside district, and there he stayed until he retired several years ago. He says in those early days there were no section line roads, and travel was just across the country wherever a wagon could best go. Although in the years after he came to Sunnyside the country began to settle up, but when he first came there it was thinly settled. However, to the southeast, on the other side of the range of wooded hills, there were several families living in the older community.

In the early days Chelsea was their trading center. That little frontier town served a large area of the Coo-wee-scoo-we District of the Indian Nation. With the coming of statehood, Chelsea was the hub of trading for parts of Rogers, Craig, and Nowata Counties, as well as the northwest corner of Mayes County. Chelsea has never grown much, and it was actually a larger town many years ago than it is now, especially when there was lots of farming, small cattle ranches, and strip coal mining. Probably most prominent in the history of Chelsea and area were the Milam family of Cherokees. J. B. Milam and Newell Milam were bankers, in business at Chelsea and at Claremore. Another of that family was James Milam, who was a promising business man, but he was killed in World War I. In his late years J. B. Milam was Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation from 1941 until his death in 1949.

Adjoining Sunnyside community on the west was the Dawes Community. The Dawes country school was in existence before Statehood and served the area half way to the village of Bushyhead. Dawes school closed very early after statehood, and the old building has been gone for many years. The only thing left that was of the Dawes community, is the cemetery of that name that is located on top of a high hill. The burial place was started sometime in the 1870s, and is still in use.

Mr. Elm says that there is not much to tell of his home community, as they were 'just plain folks', working their farms trying to make enough to 'keep body and soul together'. He says nobody ever did anything outstanding, and there was very little trouble in all his years there in that community. Of course, when there was a country square dance at some farm home, or a pie supper at the school, there would usually be some character bring a jug of 'white lightning'. With a few belts of the current 'joy juice' inside, there would be the usual fights. He tells that the favorite 'spibits' when he was a young fellow was what was generally referred to as 'Chock', or Choctaw Beer. It was made by fermenting corn meal and sugar in rain water, and could be very potent. But he says they always had good neighbors, and he looks back to those days when everybody lived peaceful and contented lives. Now, he says everything has changed.