

T-554

February 17, 1970

Index side B, first part, recording time 25 min.; interview time two hours.

Informant: Ben Garvin, 81-year-old Cherokee, Hanson Community, Sequoyah County; Oklahoma

Subject: Hanson, Akins, and east Sequoyah County history.

Ben Garvin was born about a mile from what was once the town of Hanson, and he has spent all of his life here. He is the son of Benjamin F. Garvin and Eliza Blair Garvin. His parents were also natives of this area. His grandparents on both sides came from Georgia.

The old Garvin home burned several years ago. It was a big house, having 15 rooms. It was constructed first of logs and rough planks, and later covered with an early type of pine siding. It was here that Ben and all his brothers and sisters were born and raised. The old home place is a short distance east of Ben's present home. As we walk around his old home, he points to the remains of where the old house stood and says it was a fine place. Once there were several barns, cribs, and sheds on the place. Now only a big old barn constructed mostly of logs is left. He says this old barn is well over a hundred years old. To the east of the barn is a field of some twenty acres, now part of a pasture. On this piece of land he tells that his father had a big fruit orchard when he was a young boy. The orchard produced some of the finest fruit to be found anywhere. He recalls that in those days they were never bothered with tree disease or insects, but now days every fruit tree has to be sprayed and treated for a multitude of plagues. On the back side of where the orchard was, there is a little fenced area that is the Garvin family cemetery. Some twelve or fourteen graves are here.

Down the valley about a mile from his home is a cluster of a few houses that mark the location of Hanson community. Hanson does not have any stores or business places any more. The church up on the hill is about all that is left to identify the once thriving village. In 1888 a post office was established there as Hanson, Ind. Terr., with Bennett Brewer, an Indian, as the first postmaster. Hanson probably reached its peak of growth and industry just before statehood. Cotton was one of the main industries then, and there was a big cotton gin there that operated day and night during the ginning season. Although the area was settled somewhat, the coming of the railroad up their valley was the spark that started the early day town. Ben says at one time it was a bigger town than Sallisaw. A big hotel was located on the north side of the railroad across from the depot and stockyards. Along the street that paralleled the railroad were several stores providing for all the necessary needs and services of that early day. The railroad had provided a big well near the depot along with a big watering tank for cattle and horses. The well was also for public use for those who did not have wells. Ben says that the well, built over a 150 years ago and later improved by the railroad, was a popular meeting and stopping place.