

T-589

June 6, 1970

Index side B, recording time 18 min.; interview time two hours.

Informant: Flossie Blair Neal, 56-year-old Cherokee,
Miller's Ridge, Sequoyah County, Okla.

Subject: Sequoyah Home country.

Mrs. Neal was born and raised in the northeast section of Sequoyah County, and has spent nearly all of life in this area. She is very proud of her ancestry. Her great grandfather, George Blair, came to the Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears and first settled in the Flint District.

George Blair's home was in the southwestern corner of North Carolina, and he was driven at gun point from his home, leaving every possession there to a people who came from foreign lands, supposedly bring civilization, love, harmony, and peace with them. By their force of numbers and design, they did not further any brotherly love across the world.

To the long line of descendants, George Blair was a patriarch of his people before he came to Indian Territory to start life anew. He and his children did start all over and did prosper in a new land. The Blair family did not stay in Flint District very long. After it was learned that Sequoyah had died on his mission into Mexico, George Blair bought the home and farm from Sequoyah's widow. Even in that day of the 1840s George Blair left untouched Sequoyah's log cabin; more as a monument to a famous and respected Indian. The Blair family home was built only a short distance from the Sequoyah home, where the elder Blair's lived out their lives. They are buried in the little Blair Cemetery that is just outside the present well fenced area of the Sequoyah Home State Park. Naturally Mrs. Neal has a sincere and loving attachment to her home area. She also tells that George Blair's first wife died on the Trail of Tears, and he took a younger sister of his first wife as his second marriage.

Among Sequoyah County's many historic places is one just south of Mrs. Neal's home. Unfortunately, the location and history of the Territorial day court house of the Sequoyah (originally the Skin Bayou) District is not well known. This courthouse was generally known as the Maple Courthouse. In the course of our visit Mrs. Neal wrote out this brief story of the Maple District Courthouse: "About 1887, we moved to a place (her family moved there) just south of what is now Maple Cemetery. At that time the old Sequoyah District Courthouse stood on a little hill across the creek and south of the cemetery. It was a two-story brick building. William Miller, an Indian, had his dwelling and a store just south of the Courthouse. He is also referred to as "Creek Miller". Twice a year the Indians would meet on the prairie east of the Courthouse and have a shooting contest with bows and arrows. They would shoot into corn stalks some two hundred yards distant. The one who shot nearest the center of the corn stalk target would receive a prize. This prize would be a side of beef, a colt, a calf, or perhaps a saddle. Besides being a place for holding court, the Courthouse also served as a public meeting place and even as a school house. In the late years of the Cherokee Nation the courthouse was also used as an Odd Fellows Lodge hall. With the advent of statehood the building was torn