

T-601

April 15, 1970

Index side B, recording time 30 min.; interview time three hours.

Informant: Wilson Haynie, 60-year-old full blood Creek Indian,
Broken Arrow, Okla.

Subject: Broken Arrow and Coweta country.

The story and history of the Creek Indians parallels that of many other tribes. Theirs is a story of tragic events, removals, wars, and progressive accomplishments. Time and progress have wiped out most all connections with their original homeland in the southeast United States, but history will always remember that this was once the land of the Creeks by the many names of cities, rivers, streams, and other places that today bear Creek Indian names. The Creeks are now concerned with their existence in their present land, which covers all of seven counties and parts of others in Oklahoma. One of these tribesmen is Wilson Haynie of Broken Arrow, a full blood who devotes much of his time in the interest of Indian progress and is concerned with the preservation of Indian history.

On this visit we travel a small part of the Creek Nation around Broken Arrow and Coweta. From his revelations it does not take long to understand that this was one time an area of much Creek activity. In the days of Indian Territory the first villages, later to become towns and cities, were started by the Creeks. A few of these of this area include Owasso, Broken Arrow, Oneta, Coweta, Choska, Yahola, Tullahassee, Crekola, etc. Here in the northern part of the old Creek Nation, Indian settlements for the most part were established along the Arkansas and Verdigris rivers. These river bottoms had some of the finest of land for cultivation and the Indians took advantage of this resource as evidenced by the stories of large farming activity in the olden days.

South of Broken Arrow we visit the site of the Mekko Ferry on the Arkansas River. The Indian family of Mekko was very prominent and progressive in the old days, and possessed a large farm along the river. Long ago Wilson remembers that the Mekko family had a cemetery on the high ground above the river, but we could not find it. This land has been in control of whites for a long time and many changes have been made. There is no physical evidence remaining of the Mekko Ferry, the sawmill, store, and plantation-like home that once graced this valley. Like many other Indian burial grounds, the Mekko has disappeared in the wake of the ever-present and overwhelming flood of the whites. Even the present owner of what was a part of the old Mekko place was not receptive to Indians coming to visit the site.

One present day Indian Agent selects Indians from applications for jobs according to the sound of the name. If it is an Indian name, he gives preference over an English name. This is the white man's way. Though he has never seen the job applicants, those with English names may also be fullbloods, but in the confused and twisted thinking of the white man, this does not seem to make any difference.