

May 20, 1970

T-614

Index side A, (third part), interview time 15 min.; interview time two hours.
Index side B, (first part), interview time 10 min.

Informant: Andrew Thompson, 82-year-old Cherokee,
Colcord, Delaware County, Okla.

Subject: Colcord, Beck Prairie, and Flint Creek country.

Andrew was born and raised northwest of Colcord on Cloud Creek. His father was Joseph C. Thompson, and his mother was Lizzie Lee (Ghormley) Thompson. His father was a Texas Cherokee, and his mother was from the Cherokee family of Ghormleys from Adair County.

While still a boy the family moved on down Cloud Creek in west of Colcord to a big spring in a hollow, and the hollow later became known as Thompson Hollow. Here Andrew spent much time farming, raising cattle, and later went into the mercantile business. In the early days of that part of the country the first settlement was Beckwith on Flint Creek, some four miles south of where Coleord is now. Beckwith was the name of the postoffice, but the place was generally known as Beck Mill. Here still stands the old and historic water mill dating from a time before the Civil War. It was a popular meeting place in olden days as it was the milling place for corn and wheat for miles around. It was not always peace and quiet at the mill. One time an Indian by name of Zeke Proctor came looking for a man by name of Hildebrand who was the operator of the mill. Proctor's anger had been aroused upon hearing that he had been accused of some wrong doing involving some cattle by Hildebrand. Men in that early time made their own law and order, and when Proctor arrived at the mill he started shooting at Hildebrand. Hildebrand's wife was standing nearby and one of the shots killed her. Hildebrand knelt by his wife and Proctor believed he had accomplished his mission. But Hildebrand was not hit and a long and bloody feud began, which is another story.

We visit the old Thompson home about 1½ miles west of Colcord where Andrew goes to see about their little family cemetery. There are some 12 to 15 graves within the fenced area. Andrew tells that the first buried there was an older sister. There being no public burial places in the early days, his father buried her west of the house a short distance. As time went on other members of the family were buried there. Friends and neighbors in time asked to use the little cemetery, and they were not refused.

Across the creek and over toward a bluff is a clearing. Long ago Andrew tells that there was an old man who lived in the area by name of Captain Richardson. The Captain was a veteran of the Civil War, and had told Andrew that during that war they had camped along the creek near the bluff. He also told that over in the clearing he recalled some 15 to 20 graves, probably of Civil War soldiers. But in Andrew's time he could never find the place, for at one time it was plowed over, and later let grow up in brush.

When his father was a young man he spent some time around Tahlequah. He had told Andrew that early day Tahlequah was a wild and rough place, and hardly a week went by that somebody did not get killed.