

May 5, 1970

T-614

Index side A. recording time 15 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Bryan Sunday, 66-year-old Cherokee,  
Oologah, Rogers County, Okla.

Subject: Oologah country.

The name 'Oo-lo-ga' immediately suggests that this country is Indian, or was in another time in history. There seems to be some question as to the meaning of the name. One source tells that this was the name of an Indian chief whose English name was Dark Cloud. This revelation comes from a white man, but there is no record of such a man in current historical writings so far found. From a Cherokee it is related that the name might have come from a reference to the high prairie land that became Oo-lo-ga community and town. The descriptive reference to the land, or earth (e'-la of the old Nation), and coupled with gah, a form of exclamation to something not pleasing. Hence, and after, the whiteman got a hold of the word it still retained some of its originality; E-la-gah becoming Oo-lo-gah. Perhaps there is another explanation, but Mr. Sunday does not know.

The use of the Cherokee language is sometimes difficult to understand. For example, south of Oo-lo-gah is the site of the home and land settled by the early pioneer Sunday family. The only evidence remaining now of large farm with its several buildings, large two-story house, and other fixtures, is the Sunday Cemetery. Originally set aside as a family burial plot, it has now become a general-use burial place for anyone. In the Sunday family plot is a large marble monument to the oldest of three Edward Sundays (father, son, and grandson). Across the top of the monument is this inscription: GWAH-TOH-GWA-STEE, and underneath the Cherokee syllabary of the family name: 'Sunday'. The syllabary reduced to the sounds are: HI-DAH-QUA-SGI. As taught in current Cherokee language classes the word for Sunday is: DO-DO-WA-SGUN'-I, (the short form of U-NA-DO-DO-WA-SGUN'-I). It would seem that individual usage of the language determines what and how as to application.

The Sunday family in Indian Territory days were prominent merchants, coal dealers, grain dealers, and contributed much to the growth of the little prairie towns of Oo-lo-gah and Ta-la-la.

Bryan Sunday was born in this area and has spent all his life here in this small part of Rogers County. He grew up on the farm of his parents, Edward Sunday and Rebecca Bible Sunday in south of Oologah. When he became old enough he farmed along the Caney River bottoms as well as up on the flatlands. Although he now lives in the town of Oologah, his love of the woods and river has never waned, and he spends a lot of time along the Caney and Verdigris Rivers hunting and fishing.

Bryan has witnessed many changes that have come to his part of the country. As we ride along the river bottom, he tells that he can remember when there were very few houses between the Oologah country and Collinsville. Now the whole country is heavily populated. He recalls when they went anywhere, they just took off across the country, the shortest way. Now every bit of the land is fenced, even the river bottoms.