

May 14, 1970

T-614

Index side B, recording time 15 min.; interview time one hour.

Informant: Mazie Pettie Roper, 70-year-old Cherokee,
Sallisaw, Sequoyah County, Okla.

Subject: People and places in Cherokee Nation.

Mrs. Roper is not a native of the Skin Bayou country but has been here for 40 years. She was born and raised on a farm northwest of Inola in Rogers county. She attended the Gregory country school, and the school in Inola town. When land allotments were made, Mrs. Roper received some land near Locust Grove and another tract near Braggs in Muskogee County. She has often wondered how the Dawes Commission figured things out for the Indians. In her case she received land in two widely located places and far from her home.

Her principal interest is gathering information and compiling family histories. She traces her ancestry to Nancy Ward (Chi-ga-u), and is also related to the Hildebrands, Starrs, Carters, Foremans, Keys, and other Indian families. It is these families that she compiles family history.

Her mother was a collector of books, and Mrs. Roper was fortunate enough to get some of them when her mother passed away. One of them is a history on the Hildebrands, beginning with the origin in Germany, the Cherokee Nation East, and into Indian Territory (Oklahoma). The blood lines run from full blood German to full blood Cherokee to all sorts of mixtures. Another book she has is EARLY HISTORY OF CHEROKEES by Emmett Starr, 1917, dated at Claremore (but there is no publisher's or distributor's name in the book), which appears to be quite rare and valuable.

Mrs. Roper has worked for many years in various capacities as Exec. Sec. of the County Red Cross, Administrator of Sequoyah County Hospital, Office Sec. to Doctors, etc. Her interest in history did not come about until after her retirement. Because of her associations and contacts she has had an opportunity to know much of Sequoyah County's background. (Due to her health at this time, no effort was made to go into the historical features of this area.)

She tells that each summer the Guess family holds a reunion at the Sequoyah Home State Park. These descendants of Sequoyah take their organization very seriously and have much pride in their heritage.

From throughout Sequoyah County have come many prominent Indians to contribute progress and betterment to this little part of the world. Some of those pioneer families include the Ballingers, Foreman, Duncan, Teehee, Carlile, Carters, Brewers, Sanders, Ross, Faulkner, etc.

With historic Ft. Smith at its east end, Sequoyah County was one of the first areas to feel settlement in the early days of the Indian Territory. Along its southern border runs the Arkansas River along which travelers to this country in early times came for varied reasons. Talonteskee, Webber Falls, and Wilson Rock being among the first settlements in the Cherokee Nation.