

T-614

May 22, 1970

Index side B, recording time 20 min.; interview time one hour. (3rd part of tape).

Informant: Maggie Ross, 65-year-old Cherokee,
Salina, Mayes County, Okla.

Subject: Saline Creek country.

The Saline Creek valley has been home to Indians as far back as A. P. Chouteau's visit to this area in the late 1790s, and no doubt this was inhabited Indian country long before. Saline Creek and its tributaries is still one of the few places in Oklahoma where most of the people are Indians. Maggie Ross, a full blood Cherokee, was born and raised in this area and she knows its people well. Her modest home is just off the road west of the New Jordon Indian Church.

Maggie is the daughter of Henry Thompson and Sarah Lacie Thompson. Her father has always been in this area, but her mother came from Goingsnake District. They both lived out their lives in this neighborhood and both were buried in the Mary Stop Cemetery (also known as the Earbob Cemetery). She tells that her grandparents were related to the Buckskins, Kingfishers, Meigs, and Littledave families.

Near the New Jordon Church is the Grass Cemetery. Sometime back in Indian Territory days Jess and Sarah Grass gave three acres of land for the Indians of district to use as a burial place. To Maggie's knowledge there is only one white person and one Mexican buried there.

Some of the early Indians to settle in this Saline Creek country that Mrs. Ross knows about include the Grass, Pickup, Bark, Littledave, Smith, Wilson, Pigeon, Drywater, Wickliff, Ross, Thompson, King, Buckskin, Arneechee, Vann, et al.

Just south of Salina town was the old Brewer School, and this is where Maggie first attended. From other Indian children she had heard about the Boarding Schools, and she wanted to attend one. Reluctantly, her mother consented to her going to Wyandotte Indian School. The year was 1917. Maggie completed the sixth grade there, which was the highest grade at that time. Maggie had wanted to go to the Chilocco Indian School, but her mother would not let her go. One reason was that it was just too far away to suit her mother. So Maggie stayed at Wyandotte and went thru the sixth grade three times.

Maggie attended Wyandotte Indian School from 1917 to 1923. Compared to schools for Indians of today, it was just a place, nothing more. Maggie says that in those days there were no opportunities whatever for the children to learn a trade or be exposed to things that would help better themselves. In most cases the children sent to Indian Schools in early days were the orphans, the delinquents, and those who had no home guidance or care. For the most part the children were happy and contented with their lot. The one big complaint was directed toward the mean and hateful white women employees of the school. As in other related situations they worked hard trying to make white kids out of Indian children. Maggie tells that the rules were unduly strict, for that group of Senecas, Wyandottes, Quapaws, Cherokees, Osages, and Creeks. There were probably two distantly related sides to the outlooks of students and