

T-295

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July 21, 1908

Index side A, first part

Recording time: 15 minutes

Informant: Florence Ranson, 57 years old, of Cherokee ancestry, Rose Prairie, Delaware County, Oklahoma.

Subject: (Recording made while touring grounds of the old Saline District Courthouse, the last such structure still remaining in the old Cherokee Nation.)

Strip payment made here for northern districts. Courthouse ceased to function with advent of statehood. A trading post was established here after statehood. This was the second Saline District Courthouse and was built in 1870. The original Saline Courthouse was located about a mile west of present structure. A cemetery exists on the courthouse grounds. Horse thieves and similar character were buried in unmarked graves in a separate cemetery about a half mile east of courthouse. The Teehee Springs are located nearby and are the headwaters of Little Spring Creek (formerly called Snake Creek). A grist mill was in existence here prior to statehood. A district jail was in existence here, as were the living quarters of the District Sheriff. A convicted Indian was executed here; he selected his best friend to do the shooting. District maintained large stables at Courthouse, and the foundations still remain. Many offenders were punished at the whipping tree. Their womenfolk would attend and would make salve of native herbs and animal fat to treat the wounds of the punished. A stone mortar and pestle is preserved at the Courthouse such as was used during this period. The Courthouse was scene of many shootings, and the losers were buried on the Courthouse grounds. One of those killed one night was not attended to until next morning, but not before the dogs had ate part of him. While the Courthouse was in existence before statehood there was a school for Indian children on the grounds.

NOTE: Residents of this Delaware County area are hoping that the Cherokee Nation or the Oklahoma Historical Society will take over this old Saline Court House and so preserve it for its historical value and interest.