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Recording time: 30 minutes

September 30, 1968

Informant: Henry Trout, 85-year-old Cherokee,  
Spavinaw, Oklahoma

Subject: Mr. Trout was born in 1883. His father was George Trout and his mother was Martha Parks, both pioneer Indians. The trout family were farmers and cattle raisers and spent all of their life in northern Mayes County along Grand River. Henry Trout is retired and lives in Spavinaw.

Spavinaw is a very old settlement, having been established by French Mormon traders in early part of the 19th century. The town's name comes from the French "c'pie veneau" (red shoots); or "young growth of trees" probably from the fact that the valley grew much timber and young tree sprouts were in abundance.

The Mormons built the first building on Spavinaw Creek which was a three story water mill. Its location now would be approximately two hundred yards south of the catwalk at the Spavinaw Dam. This mill produced flour, corn meal on one floor. Another floor was a saw mill to process the fine logs in the valley. A blacksmith was also operated utilizing the available water power. Indians of the area came to this mill and stay three/or four days. Before Spavinaw Lake came into being, Eucha Valley as the area was sometimes called was a most beautiful place, Mr. Trout remembers. It was also a rich and fertile farm land and many Indians had nice productive farms. Old Spavinaw town was located along the creek and in addition to the first mill, other business houses were established.

Mr. Trout recalls the first freight wagons that came to Spavinaw to supply the trading posts. These wagons were pulled by oxen. Later he drove freighters pulled by four horse teams, hauling freight from Southwest City, Mo. Vinita, and Ft. Gibson.

He remembers that the old mill, and other buildings of early days were put together with wooden pegs. He observed the construction features of the old mill when it was torn down. a man by the name of Greenleaf Smith bought the old mill building and tore it down.