

December 2, 1968

Index side A, first part, 15 minutes
Index side A, third part, 5 minutes

Informant: Ott Ragsdale, 83-year-old full blood Cherokee, of Good Hope Community, Rogers County, Oklahoma. (Some contribution to interview by his daughter, Viella.)

Subject: Mr. Ragsdale was born in eastern Adair County in 1885, a few miles west of Evansville, Arkansas, and lived there for some 9 years. The family moved to a place near Westville and lived there a short time. The next move was to western Coo-wee-scoo-wee District and lived a short time at Collinsville, at Cowella, and Turkey Hollow, before settling permanently at his present home in Good Hope area where he has been since 1908. He recalls that when they came here there were no roads and only one house between their home and the little settlement of Foyil some five miles to the west.

Miss Ragsdale remembers her mother telling of her grandmother, Mary Gunter, who came to Indian Territory in the Trail of Tears March. Before leaving Georgia, Mrs. Gunter could not bring her cherished dishes and some other home furnishings, and she took them out in the yard and broke them over a sycamore stump. Miss Ragsdale says she is nearly overcome with anger and bitterness when she hears and reads of the removal of the Cherokees from the east.

Mr. Ragsdale says that the Ragsdale family is scattered thru the Cherokee Nation, some around Muldrow, some on Rose Prairie and Rogers County, and elsewhere. He recalls that some of his relatives living in Sequoyah County used to ride horseback to visit their kin living in Vinita, following trails and wagon tracks. This was a distance of nearly a hundred miles or more.

He relates about the Proctor gun fight told to him by his father. The fight took place at the Whitmire School which was located near the village of Christie in Adair County. On April 15, 1872, the climax of old disagreements came to a head, which also broke up a meeting the Indians were having. When the shooting was over 9 men lay dead, and two more were mortally wounded and died soon after. Zeke Proctor was a prominent Indian leader among the Indians, but he was among those killed. Such was the manner of settling disputes in Indian Territory days.

He also recalls that during Strip Payment time, two of his cousins, Ed Byers and Will Chaney, were shot and killed at their home just west of Westville. No one knew the killers or the reason for the shooting, but it was believed that it stemmed from feelings over the removal and resettlement of the Indians. Strong and bitter feelings were carried to the Indian Territory from the east, and even to-day some feelings are voiced against the white race in particular.