

December 20, 1968

T-359
Index side B, second part, recording time 22 minutes.

Informant: Wattie Devault, 78 year old Cherokee, of
Marble City, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma

Subject: Some of history of Marble City
Cookson Hills, haven of outlaws
Experiences with outlaws
Kansas City Southern

Mr. Devault was born and raised fourteen miles south of Marble City. His grandmother was an immigrant from the Cherokee country of North Carolina. On her way to Indian Territory she stopped for a rest period at the river town of Dardanelle, Arkansas. While there she met Pierre Devault, a French trader, and married. The Devaults came and settled near the river south of what is now Sallisaw.

Wattie Devault was influenced by his French grandfather to get a good education. After attending country schools in the Wildhorse Mountain country and at Sallisaw, he was sent to a business school at Ft. Smith. There he learned the rudiments of bookkeeping, and subjects pertaining to the business and commercial trades. At the age of 19 he came to Marble City and established a general store. He has been here these nearly sixty years and has seen much of the growth and changes that have come to this little town hidden deep in the mountains of Sequoyah County.

Much of the old Skin Bayou (or Sequoyan) District of the Cherokee Nation remains unchanged and much of it is still as it was when the Cherokees began coming from ~~the~~ in the period around 1820. One can drive for miles along the winding mountain roads without seeing any kind of disturbance of nature by man. The area known as Cookson Hills has for the most part remained primitive. Large tracts of land are now owned by whiteman, hoping only that someday they will reap great quantities of gold and silver from the Indian lands they have worked so hard to acquire. The Indian sits and watches the whiteman, unable to understand him.

Marble City was known by another name, which he does not remember, in its early days. He does remember riding the first passenger train on the Kansas City Southern from Sallisaw to Stilwell in 1897. And to mark another day in history, Mr. Devault has been invited by the railroad company to ride on its last passenger train run thru this part of the Indian Nation on February 6, 1969. Then another part of the Indian Nation history will be ended forever.

Marble City was incorporated in 1908. The first postmaster in this Indian community was Joshua Choate, a full blood Cherokee. Around 1909 a huge marble deposit was discovered just north of town, and in one year a million dollars worth of marble slab was quarried and shipped out of here, to fill a materials contract. The marble industry was short lived as no other contracts came, and the quarry was closed down. In later years the quarry sheds and some of the equipment burned, and what could be salvaged was sold for junk.