

December 30, 1968

Index side #2, second half. Recording time 15 minutes.

Informant: Maude Welch, 87-year-old Cherokee,
Locust Grove, Mayes County, Oklahoma

Subject: Locust Grove: its early days, its peoples, and
some of its history.

Goingsnake District before 1900.

Maude Welch was the daughter of George England, a full blood Cherokee, born in the Baron-Christie country of Goingsnake District in 1821. The England family lived on Baron Fork River and farmed small patches of land to grow corn, beans, and pumpkins. There was no pasture land so they let their cattle and hogs out to open range. They provided salt close to home so the stock would not stray too far. Her childhood was lived in the all Cherokee hill country, and she recalls nothing unusual. She attended schools at Baron, Christie, and at Redbird. Her father farmed some, but usually worked as deputy sheriff in the Goingsnake District, and later served as a U. S. Marshall in Indian Territory days.

Maude married Sam Welch, a Cherokee, and they made their home on Spring Creek near Grand River in the Coo-wee-scoo-wee District in 1900. At that time nearly all of the people living on Spring Creek from the Saline Courthouse to the River were Indians. They made their living by farming small plots of land, hunting and fishing. It was here along Spring Creek that the Welchs took their land allotment. Later they moved to Rose prairie where they had a farm and lived for many years, finally moving to Locust Grove into retirement. While living on Rose Prairie they had five children. Other than the quite and simple farm life they lived, they always tried to attend the Indian meetings and church at Little Rock, Snake Creek, and at Balleu camp grounds. Mrs. Welch is still a member of the Snake Creek Indian Baptist Church.

Her children attended schools at Rose, Smith Chapel, and at Locust Grove. When she came to the area in 1900, she remembers there was a school house on Spring Creek called Cavalier and another was at what is now the north end of Locust Grove called Arcadia School. At the same time Hogan Indian Institute was operated by the Presbyterian Mission a few miles west of Locust Grove. The Cavaliers were one of the oldest Cherokee families to establish in the area, and possibly they helped start the school that bore their name. The school went out of existence about 1906. Near this old school site is the Cavalier Cemetery, started over a hundred years ago and still in use.

She remembers the Saline Courthouse. Her husband worked with the Cherokee Nation on legal and land matters and was at the courthouse on many occasions. Her memory of activity at Saline Courthouse was mostly of drunks, fighting, and shootings.