

December 17, 1968

T-359
Index side B. Recording time 23 minutes. (first part of B side of tape.)

Informant: Eva Barrett, 88-year-old Cherokee of Gore Community, Sequoyah County, Oklahoma

Subject: Illinois Station, Indian Territory (now Gore, Okla.)
Early-day life and people of the area.
Sulphur Springs

Mrs. Barrett, was the daughter of Tom and Eliza Hair and was born and raised within a quarter of a mile of her present home. She has spent all of her life in this little community just half a mile east of the Arkansas River. Main street of Gore is half a mile southeast of her home. This fertile river bottomland community of the old Illinois River District of the Cherokee Nation contrasts sharply with the rough hill country that rises quickly to the north and east. From Mrs. Barrett's front porch of her log house built 75 years ago she has seen the many changes that have come to her homeland. And yet, to-day, sitting on her front porch amid surroundings and atmosphere of over half a century ago, one feels that time and progress have stopped long and often for this community.

Before 1895 the town was known as Illinois Station. Exactly when and why the town was renamed as Gore is not known, but it is believed that it was named for a prominent family of the area bearing that name. The change in name is further believed to have been influenced by officials of the Missouri-Pacific railroad when they built their depot there before the turn of the century.

She recalls when there were very few houses in the area where Gore now stands. Back in its earlier days Dr. Will Campbell ran a general store on the west side of the Mo-Pac railroad which then was the only trading post of that area. Dr. Campbell was also the only trained medical doctor in that part of the country. She remembered seeing the first train that came thru on the railroad, but is unable to remember what year that was. The next addition to the town was a general store put in by Jess Hayes on the east side of the railroad, and a portion of that building still stands. Then, and as is now, this part of the river bottom was the best farming land in the Cherokee Nation, and the Indians farmed it well. The Illinois River flows less than a mile east of Gore and was one of the best fishing streams ever known to the Cherokees up until the Tenkiller Dam was built. Hunting of all kinds of game up and down the Illinois River was a rich blessing given to the Cherokees to enjoy for a time.