

January 23, 1969

T-372

Index side A, recording time 17 minutes.

Informant: Commodore Ross, 83-year-old Cherokee,
Locust Grove, Oklahoma

Subject: During the Civil War, Daniel Ross and his wife settled in 'Possum Hollow at the largest of two springs located about a mile east of what was later to be the town of Locust Grove. They improved and farmed the valley extending out of the hollow and at one time owned all of the area where Locust Grove is now located. These were the grandparents of Commodore Ross. From these full-blood Cherokees came many descendants now living in a wide area of Cherokee, Mayes, and Delaware Counties. As Mr. Ross sits at his little home at the southwest edge of Locust Grove he recalls much of his younger days in the district, and looking out his window tells that one time he had a field of corn where the main street of the town is now.

Perhaps Joel Bryant, a part Cherokee, may have had one of the first stores at Locust Grove. The original Bryant Store was on the hill about a mile north of the present location of the town, and it was one of the first trading posts to be put in in that area. In later years he moved down to the mouth of 'Possum Hollow. It is not known when the town got its name, but Mr. Ross says it was named for the big grove of black locust trees that grew on the hill in the south part of the settlement. The village was still very young in the year 1900, but it was beginning to enjoy some trade as it was also at the crossroads of travelers passing thru the country. The Ross place and the springs nearby was a popular stopping place for early day travelers. To-day the old Ross homesite is a State Highway Park and the springs are known as Pipe Springs.

While Joel Bryant was running his little store north of the Locust grove, he also had a post office there known as Pecan P. O. West of the grove about three miles or so at the Gap, was another little postoffice and store called Mark. Both of these establishments were short lived and were consolidated later as the Locust Grove Post Office. Old Man McMullen was postmaster for the new establishment. At that time there were a couple of stores and a blacksmith shop to start the beginning of this little town.

Commodore's mother had told him that in that January of 1884 when he was born there was eighteen inches of snow on the ground. He says that thru the years the weather in this country has changed very much, and that winters of the old days were much worse than we know to-day. He remembers when old man Bryant would haul freight across frozen Grand River in a wagon, and this is something that the present generation has not seen. When wagons and horses crossed over the ice on the river sawdust was spread to give them footing. Crossing Grand River was sometimes dangerous when the ice was breaking up and floating down, and many times the ferry could not operate. Sometimes it would be days or weeks before people could get to Pryor and to points west. Ice on the river in those early days was not all adverse. People built ice houses with wide double