

January 8, 1969

T-370

Index side #1, recording time 20 minutes.

Informant: William Flint, 89-year-old Cherokee,
Ogeechee, Ottawa County, Oklahoma

Subject: William Flint was born in 1879 in the Ogeechee community of the Cherokee Nation. His parents had settled here many years before with a few other Indian families. He has been in this one place all of his life, and still lives on his Indian land allotment. His daughter, Jennie Flint, 60 years old, lives with him, and she teaches in the public school at Fairland. The pioneer town of Ogeechee is gone now, and his present home is about where the center of the town was. It is believed that Mr. Flint is one of the oldest permanent residents of this area.

It is not known just how old the town of Ogeechee was or when it was established. In the very early days of the Cherokee Nation a group of Cherokees were hunting for a place to settle and after traveling all night stopped to rest and explore the country. As daylight began to show they were well pleased at what they saw and decided to stay here. One of the Indians of the group went around calling "i-ga tsi" (daylight coming). It is believed that when the railroad came thru the whiteman spelled the name to suit him; hence Ogeechee.

For a short while the town was known as Prairie City, but soon was returned to its original designation. While the town was located on a little creek out at the beginning of the prairie country, it was only about a mile or so to Grand River and the woods and hill country. Spring River and Neosho River came together just three miles to the northeast. These rivers were known to the Indians as some of the best fishing streams. With good fishing, plenty of wild game, and rich bottomland to farm the Indian was at peace with the world, although later the outside world did not share his outlook when it was learned what he had.

As one looks out from Mr. Flint's front door it is hard to realize that at one time here was the main street of Ogeechee. Up and down that street were three or four general stores, a bookstore, lumber yard, grist mill, blacksmith shop, post office, tombstone shop, and other enterprises. Back of his house ran a little creek. Across the creek was the Frisco railroad and depot. A little farther on north was the Breedlove Hotel, Ogeechee School, and the Berry Cemetery. While there was much farming in the area, cattle were also a means of making a living. Mr. Flint recalls when the only cattle on the prairies were the Texas Longhorns. He says they were wild and dangerous, and could hurt a man or horse if not handled properly. A main road thru the Indian Territory went thru the town on east to cross the Angel Ferry, going then on into Missouri. Much of the land south of the Frisco railroad at Ogeechee was owned in early days by the Flint family, while the land across the railroad to the north was owned by the Angel family. The Angels were Cherokees and also operated the ferry on Grand River.