

January 10, 1969

T-370

Index side #1, second part, recording time 10 min.

Index side #2, first part, recording time 15 min.

Informant: Wiley Wolf, 77-year-old Cherokee, Rabbit Trap
Community, Adair County, Oklahoma.

Subject: In the shadow of Spade Mountain in central Adair County is Rabbit Trap Community. Wiley Wolf was born a quarter of a mile from his present home here and has been here all of his life practically unaffected by the progress and changing times. He is the son of Jack Wolf who also spent all of his life in this same area. His wife, 70-year-old Allie Tidwell Harland comes from the old Tidwell family, and her grandfather Matthew Tidwell come to the Cherokee Nation on the Trail of Tears.

Wiley's memory fails him as to the beginning and history of Rabbit Trap settlement. But from his older cousin, Richard Wolf, we hear an account passed down to him. On arrival from the east in 1839 one of the many groups of Cherokees was directed to this area to build homes and settle. Of this group many had come from northern Georgia. A school of their Georgia homeland was called Rabbit Trap, so named after one of the teachers there. Rabbit Trap is not a large community, but its schools have served long and well for a wide area. The present school building is now closed, having been a victim of whiteman's way. It has for the most part killed the community life here. No more school programs for the parents to come see, no more social and community gatherings, and no longer does the school bell ring to tell of a happy and progressive Cherokee community. Rabbit Trap School looks out over the valleys and hills for the Indian children that do not come, and is confused by the passing of the yellow school bus on its way to Stilwell. The first Cherokees to settle in this community built a little log school on the crest of the hill just half a mile west of the present building. It burned after some years use and another building was put up on the north slope of the hill about a quarter mile away. This school endured for many years, until State Highway #51 came thru and forced the school to be moved. This second school stood about the center of where the highway is now. Wallace Cochran, a full blood Cherokee, lives next to the highway now, and shows where the old well and school building stood. The last location was selected in the hope that it would not be disturbed.

Wiley and Allie Wolf have raised eight children. All of them have married and left the community and have become successful in their separate pursuits. The parents speak proudly of their 38 grand children.

Wiley speaks at random of people, places and events. He confirms the story of the naming of Tahlequah, and here it is repeated. At the formation of the Cherokee Nation possibly in the 1840s, the tribal leaders wanted a site located for the establishment of a capitol somewhere about the center of their new country. A party