

February 11, 1969

T-376

Index side B, second part, recording time 25 min.

Informant: Blue Adair Dikes, 71-year-old Cherokee,
Rose Prairie, Delaware County, Oklahoma

Subject: In the days of the Cherokee Nation many Indians lived on Rowe Prairie, along Spring Creek and Snake Creek. The excellent farming and grazing lands, good hunting and fishing left little else for the Cherokees to live a nappy and contented life. Here also was the Saline District Courthouse. Many Cherokee personalities made their home in this area. But it was not for the Cherokees to have this as their undisturbed homeland for long. Statehood helped to break down the remaining feeble barriers to keep the land hungry whiteman out of Cherokee land. To-day one would have to hunt for a piece of land actually owned by an Indian.

For the older people they actually did have a happy life at one time a half a century or more ago. Rowe Prairie was named for Poe Rowe, a full blood Cherokee who was a good farmer and cattleman, and was considered to be financially independent. Poe Rowe gave much of himself to improving conditions for his fellowman and was well respected throughout the Nation. With the invasion and contamination of the whiteman, even old established names were changed. Rowe Prairie became Rose. There was wealth on Rowe Prairie, and this brought whitemen in to start the town of Rose. Rose at one time had five or six stores, a stagecoach stop, blacksmith shop and a mill.

Blue Dikes was the daughter of Brice Adair and Martha Raper, and was born on Rowe Prairie and has spent nearly all of her life here.

Mrs. Dikes talks about the old Cherokee Cemeteries in her immediate area, and their number would in a way indicate the many Indian families that once lived in this district. Some of these very old burial places are Jim Parish Cemetery, Swimmer, Jumper, Somerset, John Father, Teenee, Rowe, and Soggy Sanders Cemeteries. The land for the Jumper Cemetery was given by her mother.

She ponders the plight of the Indian, and sees not what the end will be. A few years ago she was visiting friends in Virginia. While there she was taken to view some kind of a parade thru the city. In the parade was an Indian in dress and costume provided by whites. She says the sight was disheartening. The Indian was dressed the way the white man wants to keep him - in rags and chicken feathers. She protested the scene as degrading to the Indian and in bad taste.

Referring again to her home community, she remembers well the Saline District Courthouse of the Cherokee Nation, which was located about a mile east of her home. Eliza Teehee donated the land for the location of the courthouse, and this old historic building and the capitol building at Tahlequah are the only remaining courthouses still standing today of the original nine.