

February 3, 1969

T-376

Index side A, recording time 45 minutes. Interview time 3 hours.

Informant: Joe Harlow, 78-year-old Cherokee,  
Vinita, Craig County, Oklahoma

Subject: Few areas of present Oklahoma are as unpopulated as is the Clear Creek country and Hollow Community of northeast Craig County. Areas covering as many as fourteen sections of land are still without a single house. This country is all rolling prairie land and all cattle grazing districts. It was in this country that Joe Harlow was born in 1890. His mother was Nannie Years, a full blood Cherokee, and his father was John Harlow, an Irishman.

Joe talks about George Barker of the old established Delaware family that lived in his home community long ago. Mr. Barker was believed to have been between 95 and 100 years old. He remembers Mr. Barker as one who hunted nearly all the time in the old days over a wide expanse of country along northern Cherokee Nation and well over into the Osage country. (Unknown to either of us during this visit, Mr. Barker had died the week before.)

The community of Hollow in the days of his boyhood boasted of having a large general store, a wagon shop, a church, and a school, with half a dozen dwellings. The years have erased all of Hollow now except for a little store. Joe believes the name of the community might have been called Harlow, except for the fact that a few Indians then living along Clear Creek could not pronounce Harlow. The nearest they could come to pronouncing it was "ha-lo", and it became known as Hollow.

As so many of the old timers recall, travel in the early days was an adventure in itself. From that far removed area before statehood, the nearest trading center was at Vinita some 30 miles away, or up into Kansas at Cherokee. Roads were just trails across the country in the general direction of their destination. Swollen creeks, mudholes, snowdrifts were taken in stride and some way found to move on. In the wet seasons of the year mud up to a horse's belly was expected.

Joe's parents died when he was a young man, and he left his home to travel and work in many places. At one time he worked in Massachusetts, another time he lived on the Indian Reservation at Cherokee, North Car. and had worked for a short time in California. Yet, he says in all of his travels, he says there was always that nostalgic feeling to be back in northeast Oklahoma. Now he lives alone enjoying his retirement years in his comfortable little home in Vinita, where he is near the many Indian friends he has known thru the years.

Two miles north and five miles east of Hollow was an old settlement known as Kennison. This settlement existed long before Hollow and was known to have had a store and post office. Very little is known of this place and for the most part disappeared before statehood. Joe remembers having been there when a little boy, but does not recall much of the place.