

SIDE A
PART IIINFORMANT: VONNIE DOWNING, CHEROKEE.
INTERVIEWED BY: FAYE DELPH
INTERVIEW DATE:)
TRANSCRIBED BY: LISA GARDENHIRE
PROOFREAD BY: NONA KERRBRIEF INTRODUCTION

(Now I am going to interview Vonnie Downing. Vonnie is the granddaughter of Maggie Downing. Vonnie is half Cherokee and half white. But she identifies as an Indian. She speaks Cherokee and English fluently. Vonnie is twenty years old. She works at the Indian Hospital here in Tahlequah. She is going to tell us a little bit about growing up here in Cherokee county, and a little bit about her life.)

STRONG FEELINGS AGAINST WHITE PEOPLE

My grandparents raised me. My mother died when I was three. She died with T.B. They spoke Cherokee in the house, and I picked it up. So we all speak Cherokee. I'm half white and half Indian... 'course I never did know my daddy 'cause he ran off to California when he found out that my mother was pregnant. My grandparetns raised me. They sent me to a country school by the name of Shady Grove. There I finished the eighth grade. Then I went on into high school. I was treated lot better than the other Indian children because my skin was so white. They looked down on the Indians - the teachers there, didn't show much attention to the Indian children as much as they did the white children. And I have gottin in fights many a times because my friends were the Indian children because I was Indian also. And they used to ask me whi I used to run around with the Indian girls. They'd make they'd call them all sorts of names - I got in many fights. I get sent to the principal's office and the principal and I would always get into it and I would say, "Are you gonna take up for the white people for lookin' down on the Indians?" I said, "I'm Indian and I'm proud of it." And I even told him once, "I'm even kinda sorry for the white skin I've got. Sometimes I