

T-396

March 19, 1969

Index side A, first part, recording time 15 min. Interview time one hour.

Informant: Fannie Whiteday, 82 year old Cherokee,
Salina, Mayes County, Oklahoma

Subject: Mrs. Whiteday tells of the early days of Salina town as it is known today. During her young days she was a student at the Cherokee Orphans Asylum until the institution burned in 1903. Except for a little store near the school there was no town in those days. It seems there has always been a trading post or little store in the area of Saline Creek and its junction with Grand River, dating even before 1800 when the Chouteaus established a trading post in the area. Sometime around statehood the townsite was laid out and lots sold. At this point Mrs. Whiteday tells of two whitemen who owned land in what was to become Salina. There was an old Indian cemetery of about one acre which was set aside by the Cherokees. She remembers that these whitemen cleared off all the markers and stones, when they laid out the lots and built the streets. She believes there is still one marker remaining back of the home of Irene Ross. This same fate was suffered by the Orphans Home cemetery which was located about two hundred yards west of where the School was situated. Mrs. Whiteday says that in addition to children who died at the Orphans home, there were also some others buried there. As the town grew, Hadden Street was built right thru the middle of the cemetery without regard for the graves. On the west side of Hadden Street there remain three marble monuments and at least eight unmarked graves. It is with a note of sadness that she has lived these long years and watched some people become so unconcerned and disrespectful of the sacred places of the Indian country. But it is not a new story.

Mrs. Whiteday tells of an incident in the early days of Salina. A prominent man by name of Graham had hired a man to build a foundation for a house in Salina. The house to be built was on one of the lots where the Indian cemetery had been. The hired man showed up for work, and when Graham came he was asked what they were going to use for foundation stones. Graham told him he was going to use those tombstones and markers that had been cleared off the cemetery. The hired man quit before he started. It is believed that Graham hired someone who did use the cemetery markers, and possibly the house still stands to-day.

Mrs. Whiteday tells when the Orphans Home burned in 1903. Most of the children were taken to the Whitaker home at Arroyo. Some children were also sent to Sacane, and Sequoyan Training School. She tells that nine of the older boys taken to Whitaker got off the wagon and took it back to Salina. These boys stayed with the Whiteday family for years. Two of the boys stayed there until they got married and established homes of their own.

She tells that the Cherokee Orphans ^{Asylum} ~~Asylum~~ was a large and beautiful place. Located on a little acreage of high ground about a quarter of a mile east of Grand River, it commanded a view of the beautiful river valley and the salt flats of Saline Creek. In some years this was