**Oral History Interview**

**with**

**Anile Locust**

Interview Conducted by

Julie Pearson-Little Thunder

September 23, 2016

Spotlighting Oklahoma

Oral History Project

**Oklahoma Oral History Research Program**

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**Interview History**

Interviewer: Julie Pearson-Little Thunder

Transcriber: Madison Warlick

Editor: Micki White

The recording and transcript of this interview were processed at the Oklahoma State University Library in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Project Detail**

The purpose of the *Spotlighting Oklahoma Oral History Project* is to document the development of the state by recording its cultural and intellectual history.

This project was approved by the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board on April 15, 2009.

**Legal Status**

Scholarly use of the recordings and transcripts of the interview with Anile Locust is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on September 23, 2016.

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**About Anile Locust…**

Opened in 1884, Chilocco Indian School was one of the largest federally-funded boarding schools for Native American youth in the country. Located twenty miles north of Ponca City, Oklahoma, the school offered a half academic / half vocational curriculum, focused on assimilating Native students into the dominant culture. Like most boarding schools, Chilocco went through different phases of development, reflecting changes in the federal policy towards Native Americans. These changes were often prompted by the efforts of Native educators, community workers and activists, and shifting attitudes within the larger society. Throughout these shifts, however, the school’s status as a National Guard center as well as boarding school made it unique.

A federal retreat from funding such schools, and rising Native enrollment in public schools, ushered in the close of Chilocco in 1980. By the time of its closing, it had seen close to 18,000 students and had awarded more than 5,500 high school diplomas during its near-centennial history. Today, the school’s land is owned in trust by the Kaw, Ponca, Otoe-Missouria, Pawnee, and Cherokee Nations. While remaining Chilocco alumni do not always agree on the school’s long-term legacy, most share memories of friendships and often marriages that arose from attending the school. They consider themselves part of a Chilocco family, working to share the school’s history, good and bad, and to celebrate the accomplishments of its students.

Anile Locust, of Keetoowah descent, was born one of eight children in the Flint District, Rocky Mountain Community, of Stilwell, Oklahoma. She grew up in that area until she was fourteen, when she transferred to Chilocco. She adjusted easily to the disciplined lifestyle of the school, appreciative of the regular meals, hot showers, and warm bed. A voracious reader and enthusiastic learner, Anile utilized the school’s book collection, taking in all the knowledge she could absorb. Aware of the National Guard unit at Chilocco, she became interested in the military and decided to join the Air Force after graduation. She enlisted in the fall of 1966 and attended boot camp at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio. She served in WAF (Women in the Air Force) and trained in personnel management at Amarillo Air Force Base. She was then stationed at Bolling in Washington, DC, and while there she took a short leave of absence to get married in 1968. She was later stationed at Norton Air Force Base, California, and was honorably discharged shortly thereafter, moving to Idaho to start her family.

After the Air Force, Anile enrolled at Eastern Washington State College, then transferred to Arizona State University where she majored in business and signed up for ROTC. In 1976, now back in the service and with bachelor’s degree in-hand, she was able to choose from options in the military that hadn’t previously been available to women. She selected the Signal Corps, with a secondary specialty as a logistician. During this phase of her military career, from 1976 to 1998, Anile was stationed in North Carolina, Colorado, and Arkansas, and did a tour in Germany, as well. She also took night classes and earned her master’s degree from Webster University while serving. Anile defied the odds of the time, completing jobs and earning ranks that had normally been reserved for men, from commissioned officer to platoon leader to Lieutenant Colonel by the time she retired after twenty-two combined years of service. She has also continuously honored her tribe, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, fighting for their rights and running for Chief to represent them. In 2007, Anile was inducted into the Chilocco Hall of Fame in recognition of her extensive work for and dedication to her tribe and her country.

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| **Anile Locust**  Oral History Interview  Interviewed by Julie Pearson-Little Thunder  September 23, 2016  Tahlequah, Oklahoma |  |

**Little Thunder** *This is Julie Pearson-Little Thunder. Today is September 23, 2016. I’m interviewing Chilocco alumnus and Native veteran Anile Locust at the United Keetoowah Band office in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. This interview is for the Chilocco Native veteran interview series and is being conducted by the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at Oklahoma State University. Anile, you graduated from Chilocco in 1966, and you served with the WAF, Women in the Air Force, also in the Guard and the Reserves, as I understand. You had some leadership positions and have had a busy life since you left the service. Now you’re running for the office of chief. I look forward to hearing more about our time at Chilocco*, *your military service, and your life since then. Thank you for talking with me.*

**Locust** Sure.

**Little Thunder** *Where were you born, and where did you grow up?*

**Locust** I was born in Flint District, which is Rocky Mountain community in Stilwell, Oklahoma. I was one of eight children that was born in the home, the only one born in the home. I grew up there until I went to Chilocco at age fourteen.

**Little Thunder** *What did your mother and father do for a living?*

**Locust** My mother was a single parent. My dad died when I was seven. He was a farmer and a rancher. He also raised coon dogs and did a lot of hunting.

**Little Thunder** *Did you have any brothers or sisters? You just mentioned you did.*

**Locust** Yes I….

**Little Thunder** *Where are you in the sequence?*

**Locust** I actually had four children ahead of me, and then I would be the fifth child. Then I had a younger brother from my dad who would be the sixth person. Then my mother had the two younger children after my dad died.

**Little Thunder** *What was your exposure to Cherokee language and culture growing up?*

**Locust** Cherokee was spoken in the home because that’s the only language that was spoken by my dad. My mother had limited English. She went to Sequoyah Indian School, which was an orphanage before that. She was an orphan. Her parents had died at an early age, so she attended up to the sixth grade.

**Little Thunder** *I thought I read that you went to school in Muskogee for a while. Is that not right?*

**Locust** No, that’s not correct.

**Little Thunder** *There’s things out there that are incorrect. How did you end up attending Chilocco? Was it your choice, or had your mom talked to you about it?*

**Locust** Yes, it was my choice. I used to braid and unbraid my sister-in-law’s hair. She had the arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and her name was Annie Christie before she married my brother, Hickey Scott. Hickey, also his mom was named Annie Christie before she married my dad, so it’s kind of confusing, which Annie Christie. (Laughs) Annie asked me to braid and unbraid her hair, comb her hair. She had very long hair. She had attended Chilocco, and she just made it sound like such an adventurous place. I wanted to go. I asked my mom several times. After my freshman year when I was not quite a star pupil at Cave Springs High School, then she let me go to Chilocco in my sophomore year.

**Little Thunder** *At that point did you have any other relatives up there or friends up there?*

**Locust** No, I went with my brother Jerry, who is two years older than me, but before the week was out he had already left school. (Laughter) I found out when I went to look for him.

**Little Thunder** *What was one of the hardest adjustments you had to make, going from public school to Chilocco?*

**Locust** I think the hardest adjustment was living in a building with so many other girls from different walks of life, from all across the United States. It was a little frightening at first because I was a little kid and a lot of them were a lot bigger than me.

**Little Thunder** *What was one of the easiest adjustments?*

**Locust** The easiest adjustment was I fell right into the hot showers and the clean beds and the three meals a day. That was what I fell into very easy. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *What dorm did you stay in?*

**Locust** When I first arrived I stayed in Dorm Three, and that was for the sophomores. Before I graduated I was in Home Five.

**Little Thunder** *Who was one of your favorite teachers?*

**Locust** Probably Mr. [Leonard] Hathcoat. He was pretty colorful. I heard later that he used some pretty bad language. The guys told me that, so hopefully he kept that from us girls. (Laughs)

**Little Thunder** *What did he teach?*

**Locust** He taught history. If I recall correctly, I believe we were in the history class when we heard that John F. Kennedy had been shot.

**Little Thunder** *Was that one of your favorite classes? Did you have some other favorite classes?*

**Locust** My favorite class was English because I had actually brought that from the elementary school at Rocky Mountain. I believe I was so hungry for knowledge that I must’ve read every book in that school. That was actually my favorite subject, and I was really good at it.

**Little Thunder** *Did they have a pretty good library?*

**Locust** Yes, they did.

**Little Thunder** *What were some details that you were assigned?*

**Locust** I worked in the kitchen with Ms. Bennett, and served. There were other details that were done as a basis of disciplinary action if you had some kind of indiscretion that you did. Then you would have to either rake leaves or scrub the hallways, buff the hallways, clean bathrooms, things of that nature.

**Little Thunder** *You mentioned one to me. I don’t know if you want to share it.*

**Locust** One was if you were so hungry that you would get in line ahead of other people then that was called “bucking the chow line,” and you would be assigned some hours on that. That’s what they called it. Instead of a detail, they assigned you hours. I would say….

**Little Thunder** *What is a memory, excuse me, or experience that stands out for you at Chilocco?*

**Locust** Probably the Friday night dances. We would have a social, and we would get to mingle with the other kids, especially the boys. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *Any serious boyfriends there?*

**Locust** Not really. I dated a couple of guys in my sophomore year, and both actually were Seminoles from Florida. One was a postgraduate, so he left right after the first year was out. Junior year, I dated another Seminole guy, a different one. That summer—they also had a summer program, so when I left that end of the year, he got together with another person that was in my class. When I came back my senior year, he was no longer my boyfriend. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *Now, were you there, then, under Dr. [Jim] Baker?*

**Locust** No, Dr. Baker came later.

**Little Thunder** *When did you start thinking about the military service?*

**Locust** As you know, the boarding school was set up where, I believe, it had been run by military discipline. We used to march to the chow hall. We’d march to church. I believe we didn’t march to the classes because there were so many people going different directions. Could you repeat that?

**Little Thunder** *I was just wondering when you started thinking about joining the military.*

**Locust** Oh, I see. So….

**Little Thunder** *Did you see the National Guard there at Chilocco…*

**Locust** Yes, I did.

**Little Thunder** *…and their routines?*

**Locust** They had a social, or they would have a theme where they would have the princes and the…so we did have that. Of course, there were some in the other areas like the trades; you’d have a trades queen. Yes, I do recall them there, and I believe my first interest was due to the fact that a recruiter did come and talk to us. Myself and another classmate decided we would join the Air Force.

**Little Thunder** *And this was approximately 1966?*

**Locust** Sixty-six.

**Little Thunder** *This was right after you graduated, essentially.*

**Locust** We talked to them during the school year.

**Little Thunder** *It wasn’t that usual for women to join the military at that period, was it? It was a time of big changes, I know.*

**Locust** Right. It used to be Women in the Air Force, and they called them WAFs. I believe the Army called theirs WACs. No, that was the Marines, wasn’t it? Women in the—oh, yeah, it was Women in the Army Corps. We decided it was better to be in the Air Force. Must’ve been a better recruiter or something, more persuasive. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *So what was it like when you reported? You probably went home and told your mom first, you were thinking of joining.*

**Locust** When I graduated, I actually went to work at Lawton, Oklahoma, because my sister lived there. Then from there I went to work at Tulsa, working for Skelly Oil Company in their cafeteria. Not too long after, then, I went home, and I went to see a recruiter in Muskogee. That’s when I decided. That was around September timeframe when I decided that.

**Little Thunder** *Where did you attend boot comp?*

**Locust** I went to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas.

**Little Thunder** *What kinds of things did you learn there?*

**Locust** We certainly learned how to march, and just basic physical exercise, cleaning the barracks spotless. We probably had the shiniest hallways. I believe that first six weeks was just to stress discipline where you had to be from one place to another at a certain time, which we already had that training at Chilocco, so it was pretty easy for me.

**Little Thunder** *Were there many other Native American women in your unit?*

**Locust** Not at the basic training, but I did meet some when I went to my second-level training for personnel.

**Little Thunder** *Was there an instructor that stood out at boot camp?*

**Locust** Actually my drill instructor is—it’s very funny because she was very hardcore. I thought, “Well, I hope I never ever see this woman again.” She was so mean. She would be in your face all the time. What’s funny about that is I did see her again in 1968 after I got married. I moved to a little town called Kamiah, Idaho, which is where my husband was from. One day I was walking with my little baby; I had my daughter in 1969. I walked in the post office, and there she was. That was her hometown.

**Little Thunder** *Oh, my goodness.*

**Locust** I can’t remember her name right off the bat, but believe me, I would know her anywhere. (Laughs)

**Little Thunder** *What surprised you the most about boot camp?*

**Locust** I believe it was how fast that you had to eat your meals. Even at Chilocco it wasn’t that fast. You had to be from one place to the other at the exact time, so your meals had very little time on there.

**Little Thunder** *After boot camp, you went to basic training. Is that right?*

**Locust** No, I went to the—I know in the Army they call them the Advanced Individual Training, and I can’t remember what they called it in the Air Force. It was the three-month training for whatever area you were going into. Mine was personnel management. It was at Amarillo Air Force Base.

**Little Thunder** *Had you been out of state prior to that?*

**Locust** I don’t think I had been, except for Kansas because Arkansas City is right near the line to Chilocco.

**Little Thunder** *Right. Did you get to go off base at all?*

**Locust** I did because in San Antonio I did go to church downtown. In the individualized training we would have the weekends off quite a bit, and we would go into, like, one of the hotels and throw big group parties and stuff. That was our entertainment.

**Little Thunder** *I also read online (this may or may not be accurate) one of your first tours of duty was at Fort Bolling Air Force Base [Washington, DC]?*

**Locust** Yeah, it’s Bolling Air Force Base. The Forts are for the Army, so it’s Bolling Air Force Base.

**Little Thunder** *Bolling Air Force Base. What do you remember about that time?*

**Locust** I do recall when Martin Luther King was assassinated, they closed our gates. We couldn’t go off base. It was quite a stressful time. You could feel the tension in the air. That was a period of time. Then when Robert Kennedy was assassinated, I was dating one of the color guards, and he went to wherever they kept their jets. I believe it was Andrews Air Force Base. He carried off Robert Kennedy’s body off the plane.

**Little Thunder** *I don’t suppose you got to fly much, or did you occasionally get to…*

**Locust** No not until…

**Little Thunder** *…fly with anybody?*

**Locust** …I joined the Army.

**Little Thunder** *Okay. So you were in the WAFs a total of….*

**Locust** Two years, plus.

**Little Thunder** *And then what happened?*

**Locust** I was stationed in Norton Air Force Base [California] after my tour at Bolling Air Force Base. My husband-to-be was stationed in Fort Irwin. That was California. Isn’t it Fort Irwin, California? Anyway, he wasn’t too far off. We had met at Chilocco and got married in ’68. I was allowed to—actually, I’ll back up. When I was at Bolling Air Force Base I took leave, and we got married during that time I was in the Air Force. Then I was assigned to Norton Air Force Base because it was close to where he was stationed, so we were married at the time. The Air Force has always had—family values is a head of a lot of things. They would build a lot of nice barracks for their people before they ever thought about anything else. Then they could say, “Hey, we want some more money!” (Laughter) So anyway, I was discharged from Norton Air Force Base to go to Kamiah, Idaho, where my husband had been discharged, like, two or three months before that.

**Little Thunder** *So up there, it’s an adjustment. It’s different country.*

**Locust** Quite an adjustment, but it was a very nice experience for me.

**Little Thunder** *And you were raising your children.*

**Locust** I had my first two children in ’69 and ’72. I lived on the reservation at the time, and my husband said, “Why don’t we go to college?” We started going to college at Eastern Washington State College near Spokane, Washington, so that’s how that started. Then we decided we would go down to Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, so that’s where we went with our two children.

**Little Thunder** *What were you studying?*

**Locust** I was studying just basic subjects at Eastern Washington State College, and then when I got to Arizona State it was the same until I professed a major, which was business.

**Little Thunder** *Had you kept in touch with some of your other Chilocco classmates?*

**Locust** Yes, my classmates are very close to each other. We’ve seen each other from time to time at different locations. One of my classmates, Mitchell Cyprus, was the chairman of the Seminole tribe for years. He would invite a bunch of us down, and we would go down there and celebrate different holidays with them such as the Veterans Celebration. I think they have their fair in February, so we spent a lot of time together with some other people. It’s very nice. He likes to keep his friends close. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *You both got your degrees, then, your husband and you, from ASU?*

**Locust** I did in 1976, and sometime in ’74 I had, maybe ’73, I had signed up for ROTC. I went in—well, that’s what I started doing instead of the Air Force because they weren’t taking women with children. That’s how I ended up going into the Army.

**Little Thunder** *At that point, you’re sort of thinking, “I’m going to make a career. I’m going be here a little while.”*

**Locust** I actually didn’t think that way at the time. It was only after I went to different duty stations, and then I thought, “I think I can do this, not forever but for a while.” (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *And was your focus then on, sort of, personnel business administration? Was that what you…*

**Locust** Only with the Air Force because I was trained that way in the Air Force. It was unfortunate. We mobilized several units in Maryland and Virginia and sent them to Vietnam. That was our job. I worked in the Reserve Personnel Center, so people were being called up to go to war. When I went into the Army, I selected a Signal Corps branch. The Army had just integrated its services, so there were no longer any WACs as of 1976, I believe. Might have been ’75. I went on active duty in ’77, so I was able to pick some branches that were open for the first time for women. Plus, they opened it up to women to be regular Army because they abolished the WACs, so I picked Signal Corps, which is considered combat support.

**Little Thunder** *Did you run into any—did you have challenges in terms of men’s attitudes since it was such a new venture?*

**Locust** I do believe the men did not want us there. The first summer that we went to train, that would’ve been the year ’76, the summer of ’76, and we had a lot of TV cameras that followed us around at our advanced camp at Fort Lewis, Washington. It was news to the world, but it was bad news to the men because they didn’t like us doing the same things they were doing. Some of the jobs I did have, they did try to challenge, put me through challenges that would probably cause some people to quit. I’m not a quitter, so I didn’t quit. (Laughs) The more they tried to get me to quit, I refused to quit.

**Little Thunder** *And you eventually became a platoon leader. Is that correct?*

**Locust** Yes, but that was my first assignment. The story behind that is there were five platoons in that company. Prior to my arrival, there had been a lieutenant that came in that had come from the Air Force, and he was an air traffic controller. He had had a mental breakdown. When I arrived there, he was still on the fourth floor at Madigan Hospital. The next person who took over that platoon, his major in college was psychology, so he thought he could transform everybody. He told them, “Bring me all of the misfits from the other platoons and bring them to this platoon.” He got fired after six months. When I arrived there, I had what I call a ragtag outfit. They were nearing discharge, or they were under some kind of cloud where they would have to leave the service. I had fifty-five of those men and women that were very few women, but men that were quite a challenge.

**Little Thunder** *That would be a tough assignment.*

**Locust** I believe that platoon was given to me so that I would quit.

**Little Thunder** *That’s wonderful that you stuck with it. Eventually, I think you did get promoted to what rank?*

**Locust** The next rank after that is the first lieutenant, and I believe I was in school when I got promoted. I went to the second level of the Signal Communications. At that same time, I also was trained as a logistician, so I had two specialties. My main branch was Signal Corps, but logistics management was my second specialty. After that, I was reassigned to Fort Carson, Colorado. That’s where I became a company commander.

**Little Thunder** *You mentioned that you went overseas. Was that prior to entering the Army?*

**Locust** My overseas assignment was with the Army. It was after my specialty branch training I was sent to Mannheim, Germany, where I was assigned to the 51st Maintenance Battalion. I was their electronics maintenance officer from the logistics training. At a certain point in time they also gave me an added duty as detachment commander. At the time, it was quite comical to see a woman in front of a detachment and they were somewhat pregnant, which was me. (Laughter) From there, then I was reassigned to Heidelberg where I worked in the automated multimedia facility at Campbell Barracks, which is the headquarters for the whole Army units there.

**Little Thunder** *What was it like being in Germany? Did you get to go off base a little bit?*

**Locust** We traveled quite a bit to Austria, Italy, and some of the surrounding countries. It was a beautiful experience with all their countryside, and their food is great. Of course, I did indulge into some of their beer and wine they have there. (Laughter)

**Little Thunder** *Some great travel experiences.*

**Locust** It was very nice.

**Little Thunder** *When you said “we,” was that you and your husband traveling?*

**Locust** Yes, my husband and my two children…

**Little Thunder** *And your children.*

**Locust** …and then my third one after he was born. That was in 1980.

**Little Thunder** *Great experience for them, too.*

**Locust** It was.

**Little Thunder** *So you put in, overall, twenty-some years?*

**Locust** I counted probably about twenty-two-plus years. Twenty-two years for sure.

**Little Thunder** *And were you just ready to leave at that point? You could take your….*

**Locust** When I left active duty, I went into the Reserves at Denver Colorado. At some point in time I was recalled back to active duty in ’94 through ’95. My job then was to assist the neighboring states, (it was a ten-state area) of training Reserves and National Guard units to be prepared to mobilize.

**Little Thunder** *Really having lived in all those places, what kinds of—how does that sort of help inform the person you are today?*

**Locust** I’m not sure about that question. I feel like I do have a well-rounded experience with different types of people. I just have, I have a different outlook on what should be done, but I know that now that I’m home I feel like I have a different type of commitment and obligation.

**Little Thunder** *Aside from the sort of military orientation at Chilocco, were there skills that you think you came out of from there that helped you with your military career and also with your personal life?*

**Locust** I would probably say just the close interaction with people, even though we were all younger. What I thought was a challenge in the beginning, it was so many people in the same building. I believe that helped shape my acceptance of living in the barracks with other women.

**Little Thunder** *What changes did you see by the time you went into, by the time you left active duty? What changes had you seen in the Army by that time for women and perhaps for Native Americans?*

**Locust** I feel like I was a pioneer, even though that’s not a good word to use for an Indian. (Laughs) Our group that went in that year, I believe, were pioneers into what would happen. Since then, women have gone into combat because men realized that women did have certain skills and abilities and they were able to carry their own load. If they didn’t, they probably left. There’s been more of an acceptance, and unfortunately it’s probably due to some individuals who did give their lives in front of them. So they know that they were able to. When they swore an oath to defend their country by their life, they meant it.

**Little Thunder** *What’s one of your, I guess, accomplishments in the service that you’re the most proud of today?*

**Locust** I would probably say it would be grooming the men and women that were in my ROTC class. They were children, yet they weren’t. They weren’t grown-ups, but yet they were. My duties as an assistant professor of military science was to do thirteen or fourteen weeks of professional ethics, and I hope I did a great job. I still have one person that’s on my Facebook page, and he has been such a success. I would say this young man is, he’s the example of what went out there. I’m very proud of that ability to have taught them that last year before they joined the rat race.

**Little Thunder** *That’s wonderful. In 2007 you were inducted into the Chilocco Hall of Fame. What was that like?*

**Locust** I was very proud of that fact that they recognized me as such, and it was my classmates once again who put that in. They were basing it on the fact that I had actually gone from my enlisted status to the officer status, and just the combination of my whole military career.

**Little Thunder** *Your young friend, woman friend, at Chilocco, your friend who was also interested in the military, did she follow through and make a career of it?*

**Locust** No, actually she was hitchhiking that summer, and she was hit by a truck. She didn’t get to go, so I went for both of us.

**Little Thunder** *I’m sorry. So you go to the reunions each year. Why are they important to you?*

**Locust** Well, I’ve gone every year since I was able to in the ʼ80s. I missed one year. It was 2006, which I probably would’ve been inducted that year, but it was the year my daughter got married, so I missed it. I’ve gone because it brings back good memories.

**Little Thunder** *Are you a member of any other Native veterans groups?*

**Locust** No, I’m not. The only time I’ve—not a veteran [group], but the only group I’ve really been involved with was when I lived in Colorado Springs, stationed at Fort Carson. I was a member of the Native American Women’s Association and sponsored the Miss Indian Colorado. That’s the only time I was really a member of an Indian group.

**Little Thunder** *What about social attitudes? I think mainstream society’s sort of made a turnaround in terms of thinking about their veterans, and they’re actually following more of a Native American lead in terms of trying to honor veterans and recognize their contributions. Are we where we need to be right now? Maybe you can specifically talk about this community and its relationship with its veterans.*

**Locust** I don’t know how much I could speak on that, mainly because I’m not a member of a veterans group. I know the veterans we have in our community, they do attend, like, the powwows, and with the Keetoowahs we do have our own color guard. They’re very proud of that. We did have a very nice veterans office here with two people, Jacob and Norma Littledave. They would get hats, and they had a veterans breakfast for everybody. With the loss of our casino, it caused a lot of our general fund dollars to be wiped out. The first ones that were to go when they had a layoff was our veterans office. As far as the attitudes, I do believe that there’s been a lot of, like, congressional attention to that. I know Jacob just met with [Markwayne] Mullin not too long ago, maybe a couple weeks ago. He was very active in making sure that our veterans in this tribe were taken care of.

**Little Thunder** *Maybe you can tell us just a little bit about the United Keetoowah Band’s history because you are running for office. You’re running for chief. Not all the listeners may know.*

**Locust** The United Keetoowah Band is made up of three different groups that were here prior to the Trail of Tears. We had groups that were the old settlers. We had a group that was Western Cherokee. Then we had the traditionalists, which were the Keetoowah society. They knew that the lands were being taken on the East Coast, so they decided they would take advantage of the lands that were being given on the west side. They came over, not all at once but in different groups, and settled in Arkansas. Some came on a formal treaty, which was the 1819 treaty. As time went on, the settlers of that area wanted that land. Then the government made another treaty in 1828, and that’s when they were moved to Oklahoma Indian Territory. That’s where our home is now. We knew back in 1905 before statehood that things were changing. The government was going to be making deliberate efforts to take the land. The Allotment Act and all those things came about.

The Cherokee Nation was going to be terminated, so when they signed their treaty, (I think theirs is 1866) they were told by the government that when the last Dawes enrollee passed, the sunset has arrived. They would no longer be the great Cherokee Nation. That person has died about three years ago. Really they’re a tribe that have evolved, but now, if you were to count the law, sure, you would say they’re not really a tribe now. They are an association that was formed by presidential declaration. Our people, when they decided to form the United Keetoowah Band, they looked at the situation and said, “We’re going to follow what the United States is saying. We’re going to form under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, and we’re going to form under the Indian Reorganization Act and call ourselves the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians.” It was sent to Congress, I believe, in ’36 the first time, and then it was disapproved.

Finally in 1946 it was approved by Congress, and at that time the United Keetoowah Band received its constitution and the corporate charter. They were formed in 1950 by the people’s vote. It was ratified in 1950. We’re just coming up on our celebration. October 3, 1950, was our anniversary. We are the valid Cherokee tribe that’s here. The government has given us lands that say that this is to the Cherokee tribe who has been formed under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act, but due to huge political influence and lots of money that was received through some of the monies we should’ve received, then the Cherokee nation of Oklahoma has been able to keep the Keetoowahs down by passing laws, getting all the compacts with the United States like HIS [Indian Health Service], all the different programs. They have made themselves manager of our OIWA land, which I am reasonably sure that we can manage our own lands.

Many people don’t know this history. They believe the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma has the right to hold these lands, but they don’t. I am a very hardheaded ethical person who will make sure that they are exposed to the right people. I believe it’s happening now because there’s been certain people that has come across my path, like that guy Frank, I said, that brought some of that food. He said, “I’m going to donate some wheat to you. Do you have a place you can plant it?” I said, “No.” I told him the same story I just told you. I told him that we would be very happy to put that wheat in the OIWA land that is now being held by the Cherokees and they have buffalo on it. Just tell them take your buffalo and bring them out here to this huge mud hole that they’ve dug, or we can hold the buffalo hostage and have buffalo feasts for the next few years. (Laughter) I do believe I am strong enough and capable enough and hold onto my history that I can get that done.

**Little Thunder** *I believe you can, too, and I wish you the best of luck.*

**Locust** Thank you.

**Little Thunder** *Anything else we need to add, Anile, before we close?*

**Locust** No, I think that’s it.

**Little Thunder** *Thank you so much for your time today.*

**Locust** You’re welcome. Thank you for coming.

**------- *End of interview*** *-------*