

Mr. Lowrey's grandmother came from that group of Cherokees who were at one time in Texas, and sometimes referred to as the Texas Cherokees. The Lowrey Cherokees came from the Tennessee-Georgia factions. Both family groups eventually came to settle in this Canadian River valley. The original village of Briartown was northeast of the present town. The coming of the railroad in the late 1800s prompted the move to its present location.

On the south side of the river is the little town of Whitefield, once a capitol of the Choctaws. The river was the dividing line between the Cherokee Nation and the Choctaw Nation, but these two tribes have lived in peace and harmony with each other for much over a century.

The Missouri-Kansas-Texas was the first railroad to come thru this part of the Indian country sometime in the early 1880s. Around 1900 the Midland Valley Railroad came up thru Briartown country.

Some of the early families who lived in the Briartown area that Emmett recalls were the Allens, Mabrys, Stevens, Mooneys, Jones, Marshalls, Wests, Starrs, Barnes, Lowreys, and Pitchlins. His Grandparents, the Lowreys, settled in the area in the very early days. He relates that they put out the first big orchard in that part of the country.

Emmett recalls that the first school he attended was an Indian Missionary School at Briartown. This was a log building built by the Indians and the mission. He tells that before his time his father attended school there just one day. The second day he went with some other boys fishing and never went to school again. Although his father could not read or write, he was a successful farmer and trader.

In its better days Briartown was a busy little village. It had two or three stores, lodge hall, doctor's office, depot, post office, hotel, and other business places. At one time lots of peaches and grain were shipped from Briartown. Later the fertile river valley produced many kinds of vegetables which were shipped out by the carload.

Not far north of Briartown is Porum, another of the old towns in the Indian Territory. Porum has not always been known by that name. In its early beginning it was known as Starrville, started and built up by the Starr families.

Emmett talks about the Starr Cemetery. One of the largest marble monuments to be seen in the country is that of Frost Starr. He tells that this huge stone was hauled in by ox team and wagon. The monument marking the resting place of Tom Starr is another of the large markers, which he tells is of the hollow construction. He says that one time money hunters had pried the top off the monument and apparently found nothing. Near this cemetery was the large cedar log house of Tom Starr.