

In keeping with community advancement and progress, Fisher Bend country also had its schools. Joe says the first school that he remembers was the Yellow Springs School. He did not attend this school as it was closed and became a church, and his father the Rev. J. B. Ray was the minister there for many years. Just east of Yellow Springs was the Valley School which was the first school Joe went to. He also attended the Dugger School (sometimes called the Moore Springs School). Out on the prairie west was the Flat Rock School, and up north was the Lick Bend School. Miss May Brown was the first teacher that Joe went to.

Although Fisher Bend people were originally all Indians, as time went on white people kept crowding closer and getting a foothold in this area. The Indians continued in the majority until the government came in and took their land, so both the Indians and the whites lost. Joe remembers when the whites were moving into his country, there came a family of Swedes by name of Stolhann. Their's was quite a problem as most of the family could not talk English or Cherokee.

Way out on the prairie west of Fisher Bend was another of the little towns that have disappeared. Neodesha, was a cow town on the Missouri-Pacific Railroad. There was a general store and a post office there, and a big stock yards. Lots of cattle and hay were shipped from there long ago. Nothing marks Neodesha now, except the remains of one of the old houses that was in use in its early days.

Joe remembers long ago seeing places where the Old Military Trail came down thru his part of the country. He also recalls seeing some of the stone walls standing at that time of Old Union Mission. Traces of these two historic marks are not to be found now:

Almost forgotten in the march of time was the existence of the little community of Sleeper. This Indian community was on the west side of Grand River just north of where Taylor Ferry used to be. There was a school there, and Mrs. Anna Butler was a teacher there. Joe tells that his father used to go down there to the church and preach. Those were the days when the Blue Back Speller and the McGuffey Reader were the acme of test books and when a student had mastered them there was little else the country schools could offer. Joe tells that when he first started to school the first grade was called the 'chart class'. That class did not use books, but studied from a big chart, and a new chart was used each day. Joe tells that in that day teachers were lord and master in their school rooms, and strange to modern ears, they had the backing of parents then. Pupils of that day ranged in age from six to twenty-six and when necessary the teacher would use the paddle on any of them. The old time teachers had a lot of responsibility for their \$40 a month and they earned every cent of it. Perhaps they came qualified, for they feared not even the devil himself.

In recalling his young days in Fisher Bend, Indian gatherings were frequent. The popular cornstalk shooting grounds were about a quarter mile east of his home, and the stomp dance grounds were about the same distance north of his home. Indian ball games were also one of the great pleasures. Joe tells that sometimes the women teams played against the mens teams and a rougher game he never saw.