

On upper Spring River in Ottawa County there is a most unusual place. It has been variously known as "Devils walk", "Devils Promenade", "The Village Crossing", etc. In the early days of the beginning of Indians settlement in that part of Indian Territory, this seems to have been a focal point of assembly, meetings, and other activities. This place was on the main road from the Indian country east of the river to the "Government Blacksmith Shop", and on to Baxter Springs, Kansas, the trading center of those early times. Here in an area of less than four square miles are 20 of the known 59 old cemeteries of the whole of Ottawa County. In this same area at one time was located the Lincolnville town, a place called Lover's Leap, the old Quapaw Medicine House, and St. Mary's of the Quapawa, a Catholic school for Indians. At the western edge of the old Quapaw reservation ran the old Military Road, perhaps the first connecting link between the north and Texas and dating from the early 1800's.

When the Quapaws settled in northeastern Oklahoma following their removal from Arkansas and other places, some of their principal leaders were Charley Quapaw, John Madison, James Silk, George Land, and Frank Vallier. The family of Abner Abrams, a member of the Stockbridge tribe, had been adopted into the Quapaw tribe, and the elder of this family contributed much to the tribal organization and progress. Some of the prominent Quapaw families who have lived on the reservation include Griffins, Angel, Beaver, Clabber, Perry, Peckham, Shapp, Mcatters, Vallier, Goodeagle, Medeagle, Xavier, Whitebird, and Greenback. There were many others but their names do not come to memory readily.

In the old days most Indian reservations had trading posts. The only trading posts that Robert recalls was one located southeast of where Miami town is now on what was the Ottawa reservation, and another was on the Neosho River north of Miami.

Although tobacco was grown and used by Indians even before the Whiteman came to North America, Robert says that they also had substitutes. One was the use of sumac leaves, sometimes mixed with other leaf plants as well as tobacco. Tobacco has also been used in Indian ceremonies and rituals, as well as an ingredient in Indian Medicines. Along with this commodity, cedar has also been important in ceremonies and as a medicinal plant. Robert says he has never understood some of the Indian ways with some plants, and the use of cedar is one of them. It seems that there are different kinds of cedar, as well as both the male and female plant, and each has its own application and use. He says there are some Quapaws who still grow and use native tobacco.

At one time it would have been unusual to find an Indian who did not know most of the plants and trees, and the names of insects, birds, and other wildlife. In a note of discouragement, he says few young Indian children could go into the woods and tell you much about the world of nature.

Inter-marriage has done its evils in destroying and breaking down a lot of Indian traditions and way of life. In most cases where an Indian marries a white, the white influence dominates. Much could be said on this matter.

The whiteman must have really hung one on when he coined the designation. 'Five Civilized Tribes'. In one way it was an injustice to all other tribes. Some of the most prominent Indians have come from tribes not even remotely related to the 'Five'. It would also be wrong to pursue the subject further.