

Many Indians have lived in this valley and on the hills that overlook it. Isaac says that some never left their homes, except perhaps to go to mill. In the beginning years of Indian Territory, there were no towns except across the line in Arkansas. Some of those trading centers were Cincinnati, Cane Hill, Dutch Mills, and Maysville, Ark. The history of Maysville adds its colorful beginning to the history of the Cherokees. It is told that the principal activity in the beginning of Maysville was that of smuggling whiskey and other contraband into Indian Territory. The stores that lined the west side of Maysville's main street had two front doors - one in Arkansas, and the other right on the Indian Territory line. In later years Maysville did compete well with other trading centers in legitimate business places and drew much trade from Indian Territory.

As we ride down the highway, Mr. Rogers points out old farm and home sites. Bird Morris had a large acreage on the east side of the valley, while Joe and his brother Tom Morris farmed much land on the west side of the valley. The Morris family of Cherokees were very prominent in that area and contributed much to its progress and advancement. Quite some distance south of Watts, we stop in order that Isaac could show the remains of the Morris Cemetery. Little remains now to be seen as the railroad right-of-way fence seems to have gone thru the burial ground. Some fifteen graves can be identified. Against the fence there is the small marble marker for the grave of "Rebecca Moton, wife of Henry Moton, died March 18, 1879, Aged 64 years. The fence goes right over the grave of "Catchie Parris, died March 17, 1887, Aged (never inscribed)". Some graves were inside the right-of-way, but have been obliterated by years of weed cutting, and railroad maintenance. Only recently an underground cable was laid thru a portion of the burial place near the fence.

We leave the highway and take a county road up over the mountain to the east. After some distance we turn off onto a little road that goes down Grady Creek. The road ends at the farm home of Charley Russell. A great uncle of Charley, Wing Russell was one of the first settlers in this rough hill country. This little area on Grady has its own history. It is believed that one of the ten or so log cabins that were built here after the Cherokees came in 1839, was that of the Cherokee statesman Goingsnake. Although no monument or memorial marks the resting place of Goingsnake, his grave has been authenticated as being the one up on the higher ground above Grady Creek.

Going back toward Ballard Creek Valley, we pass by the Oak Hill schoolhouse, which was one of the very early schools of the area. Old timers tell of the difficult time the school had in keeping teachers, as some of the boys were bigger than the teachers and rougher than those flint rock hills. They recall also that one time a very small man came to teach at the school. To the regret of many of the boys they learned here was one teacher they did not bluff and run off. He taught there for several years, and it was a long time before it was learned that he had trained for the fight ring, and later had served all thru the Civil War as an officer leading raiding parties.

As we reenter Ballard Creek Valley, Isaac tells that Proctor Ford was over the mountain to the northwest on the Illinois River. At times that was the home of the well known Ezekiel (Zeke) Proctor of Indian Territory days. Like many of the older people of Adair County (most of which was once Goingsnake District)