

repair equipment, and rest. Mr. Jones told him that while they were at the Archer Ford, the elder Jones took sick with typhoid fever and died there. That was about 1868, and young Jones was around 18 years old. The elder Jones was taken across the creek and buried on a little ridge. Mr. Sitts in later years located about where the burial was: as one enters the gate of the Alberty Cemetery, to the right and a little north just beyond the fenced area there is a little ridge. At that same time some ten to fifteen soldiers who were with a detachment encamped at the Ford also got sick and died. They too were all buried on the little ridge, and none of the graves were ever marked. As far as is known the graves were never moved, and the little graveyard is unmarked and known only to a few.

Time and events moved on. For years thereafter the Texas Trail crossed Archer Ford on its way south, went by where Bethel Church once stood in later years, and on across the prairies. Not too far on southwest, the Trail crossed Chouteau Creek at a place called Rocky Ford, on its way toward Ft. Davis, Wigwam Neosho, and Ft. Gibson on the Arkansas river.

The imagination can only dwell on some of the things that could have happened in this frontier country. Long ago Mr. Sitts found the blade of a military lance of a type used before the Civil War near the old Archer place. Its owner killed in a battle with the Osages? The lance thrown and never recovered? Who knows?

Again in days before there was that country to become the Cherokee Nation, before the Cherokees were moved here by force in 1838, some two miles north of Archer Ford, there existed a frontier trading post. Nathaniel Pryor operated a post on the north bank of the creek up until his death in 1831. A monument to the memory of this man was erected sometime in the 1940s by a historical society. The inscription reads: "Captain Nathaniel Pryor. Lewis & Clark Expedition 1803. War of Independence 1812. Died June 1, 1831." In later years a town and a large creek in Mayes County were named for this man. In the turbulent days of the pre-Indian Territory time, Captain Pryor worked with the Indian tribes as a representative of the government to promote peace and harmony. His efforts have been mentioned by historians as having been commendable in working with the Indians. To-day no road leads to Pryor's grave, and the grave is fenced but not maintained. The land on which the grave is located is on private property, and the owner does not permit visitors now, to the grave. The landowner is within his legal rights under Oklahoma law, and can refuse entry onto his property. So be it. Little known is the fact that there are two unmarked graves on the south side of Pryor's. One is that of his Osage Indian wife, and the other that of one of their children. Mr. Sitts remembers the site of Pryor's trading post, and tells that long ago when he went by there, he always noticed the big steel ring that was pinned into the rock on the creek bank, that was used to tie boats up for traders coming to the post.

In Archer country at one time there lived many Indians. Some of them were the Alberty, Bumgarner, Keys, Rider, Thompson, Young, Root, Daugherty, Bean, Wright, Crittenden, Mayes, Markham, Nicodemus, et al.