

It would seem that many of the residents of Wyandotte town are descendants of one of the many tribes that once lived in this northeast corner of Oklahoma.

Robert has seen the many changes that have come to his homeland and the Wyandot area. Most of the old business houses are gone, including the once popular Frisco depot. The few commodity and service establishments now existing cater to a community of retired men and women, people who work in the surrounding towns, vacationers, and the natives of the hills.

He tells that when the railroad came thru, they had a 100-foot right-of-way across the Wyandot Reservation to the Missouri line. In the right-of-way agreement the Indians would be paid for any livestock killed by the trains. This was one agreement that was honored. Robert says that he was paid for ten head of steers that were killed by trains.

He recalls that when he moved from the Peoria district to Wyandotte Mathew and Julia Mudeater were running the hotel in the town. Their accommodations and food were excellent he remembers. At one time Mathew Mudeater, was Chief of the Wyandots.

Another of the prominent Wyandot families that came into the Indian Territory in the early days were the Robitailles. They contributed much to the settlement of the town. They were merchants and farmers. Mr. Long tells that they owned considerable land in the valley of Lost Creek.

On the west side of Spring River a few miles northwest of Wyandotte, the Wyandottes established their own tribal cemetery possibly in the 1860s. Many of the early monuments there date from the early 1870s. There are also many unmarked graves that probably date from a time when identifying markers were not used. Some of the early Wyandots buried there, in what is now known as the Bland Cemetery, were the Armstrongs, Bobitailles, Mudeater, Bonnin, Bland, Hicks, Long, Dawson, Pacheco, Whitewing, Jitte, King, and Nan-an-we.

The settlement of this northeastern Indian country in the early days is given recognition by the State Historical Society. On a plaque some four miles east of Wyandotte along the Highway is this inscription: "SENECA AGENCY About 12 mi. south. Established July 4, 1832 near Buffalo Creek for Senecas, Cayugas, Shawnees and remnants of six other tribes that came from Ohio over a Trail of Tears as the United Nation. They signed first treaty Dec. 29, 1832, made by U. S. Commissioners Henry Ellsworth and John Schermerhorn, in Indian Territory. Ex-Gov. Stokes, N.C., headed the Commission, and was U. S. Agent for these tribes, 1836-37."

Important to these Indians of the Ottawa County country is the Seneca Indian School. It was originally established about 1869 as an Indian Mission by the Friends Church. In later years it was taken over by and is still operated by the government. In its long existence thousands of Indian children have attended this boarding school, and for some the only education they received. Indian children from many tribes have attended the school at Wyandotte, and it is held in high regard and respect.