Looking back over the history of Oologah town, it has enjoyed considerable prosperity in days long past. This part of the country was principally cattle range, but with some crop farming in the river bottoms. When the Missouri-Pacific Railroad came thru in the 1880s, Oologah, along with other little towns of the area took on growth and prominence. At Oologah was built large stockyards by the railroad, as well as a big grain elevator. The main streets ran parallel with the railroad and another ran east-west to form the business district. Present US Highway 169 now runs along the west side of the railroad, but it is of much later addition. It is said the first post office was established there in 1891 and Bill Hewett was its first postmaster. At the peak of its prosperity the town had four mercantiles, drug store, lumber yard, hardware store, barber shop, saddle and harness shop, two blacksmith shops, two doctor's offices, and other establishments, including the Oologah State Bank.

At the southwest edge of the city limits of Oologah, Bryan Sunday points out an old road, now closed, that was the main highway north-south thru the country when he was a young fellow. This dirt road was known as the 'O-K Trail', or 'Oklahoma-Texas Trail'.

Early settlers to the Oologah country include the Rogers, Sunday, West, Harris, Bible, Walker, Sanders, Marsh, Mustain, Denny, Scruggs, McLaughlin, etc.

A mile north and 2½ miles east of Oologah, Clem V. Rogers came to this area before the Civil War and founded the old Dog Iron Ranch. Clem became one of Indian Territory's and Oklahoma's prominent men. On this ranch Will Rogers was born in 1879. A part of the old ranch is now in the Will Rogers State Park. The two-story ranch house was moved out of the Oologah Lake area to higher ground to be preserved.

At one time the Oologah country and all of the Verdigris River valley was Indian country. In this land lived Cherokees, Osages, Delawares, and Shawnees. Place names reflect the Indian heritage of this little part of the country, such as Claremore (for Osage Chief Clermont), Bushyhead, Talala, Watova, Nowata, Lenapah, Oowala, Sageeyah, Sequoyah, Catale, etc.

Another of the early Indian families to settle in the Oologah country were the Musgroves. Their old place was on Rabbs Creek west of Oologah near its convergence with the Caney River. Descendents of the Musgroves are prominent citizens in Rogers County to-day.

Bryan relates that in early days his grandmother told him one day two men came by their place down on Caney River. They bought a horse and asked if they could eat supper with the family, which they were welcomed. After supper the two men left, crossing the river at a nearby ford. After the men had gone, his grandmother told him the two men were Jesse James and Cole Younger, well known outlaws of early days. When his grandmother was cleaning off the supper table she found a twenty dollor gold piece under each of the two plates where the men had taken supper.