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Elizabeth Ross  
Investigator  
January 13, 1938.

Interview with Charles Davis  
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

In an out-of-the-way section of the old Tahlequah district there once lived a Cherokee citizen named Tallow Mayes. His home was in the same locality for many years. As did many other Cherokees, Tallow Mayes cultivated a tract of land, and raised some livestock, realizing a livelihood. When he was becoming somewhat advanced in age, the Cherokees received equal shares of the money which was realized from the sale of the Cherokee strip, a portion of land lying in the western part of the Indian Territory. It was in 1894 that payment of the money was made. Mr. Mayes had a number of minor children and he received from the treasurer of the Cherokee Nation a good-sized sum, largely in bills of various denominations. But he seems to have exchanged the paper money, or a portion of it, for coins. He carried the money to his home, not caring to deposit it in the bank which was then in operation at Tahlequah. Many of the Indians preferred to keep whatever money came into their possession in their homes.

DAVIS, CHARLES

INTERVIEW

#12728

-2-

Some time after, the Cherokees throughout their nation had been placed in possession of their shares, Tallow Mayes became prostrated from severe illness. His condition soon became critical, and his death occurred. Soon after that event a number of persons spoke of the money he had received at the time of the Strip payment, as it was usually designated among the country people. This money, or a considerable portion of it, according to the narrative, was missing at the time that he died. The reason, it was said, was that he had placed \$1,500.00 in coins in a metal container of some sort, and after digging a hole in a place known to himself alone, had buried the coins and filled the hole with dirt and gravel. From time to time, as he needed money, he no doubt intended going to the place where the money was hidden and taking out such sums as he wished. But his unexpected and fatal illness had disappointing results for his family. Although Mr. Mayes tried to indicate where the coins had been hidden, he failed. As time passed the story became widely known and from time to time search was made for the money, by various persons.

DAVIS, CHARLES

INTERVIEW

#12728

-3-

Besides men who seek hidden money with pick and shovel, hoping to find by chance the spot in which sums have been hidden, there are others who use mineral rods. These mineral rods, or divining rods, as they have been called are thought to be very useful in locating gold and silver coins. But in the case of the \$1500.00 hidden by Tallow Mayes more than forty years ago, all efforts and devices have failed so far as known. In case the coins were found at some time during the years, their finder was some person who said nothing whatever concerning his success. But the probability is, in the opinion of those familiar with the subject, that the coins have never been located. The locality is in a rugged portion of what was once the Tahlequah district, and the receptacle containing the coins in all probability lies where it was placed for safe-keeping soon after the close of the payment at Tahlequah, in June, 1894.

A number of people, including Cherokees east of the Illinois River remember the story.