

JACKSON, EFFIE S.

CAMP ARBUCKLE

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Effie S. Jackson

Journalist

January 4, 1938

A Visit to the Site of Camp Arbuckle

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Information secured from Lincoln Postoak, 2930 West 41st Street, Red Fork, James H. Gardner, Beacon Bldg, Tulsa, Lilah D. Lindsey, 516 North Frisco Avenue, Tulsa.

Lincoln Postoak

Since I planned to visit the old site of Camp Arbuckle I thought best to interview Lincoln Postoak first. I had talked with pioneers about the reliability of old Lincoln. Mrs. Lilah D. Lindsey said, "You can rely on what Lincoln Postoak says; he was born in this region and he knows. He ran the ferry at the mouth of Eucheek Creek where it flowed into the Arkansas River. Eucheek Creek is a small creek now, it is about one mile west of Sand Springs."

S. R. Lewis, Tulsa, Oklahoma, an authority on Cherokee history and a pioneer versed in Indian history said Eucheek Creek is about one mile west of present Sand Springs. That in the early 80's Fuswa Thlocco, Big Bird, lived on the east side of the Creek and an Indian called Ochele across the creek from him. This may account for Lincoln Postoak's statement, "I ran a ferry at the mouth of Eucheek Creek,

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from Big Bird's house across to Ochele." Mr. Lewis said that old Lincoln Postoak was considered an authority on history of his day. He emphasized the fact that Lincoln had little to say but that you could depend upon what he said. Mr. Lewis also made the statement that he believed Lincoln was the first Indian to become a Mason in this region, he believed 32nd degree.

I talked with James H. Gardner, well known Tulsa geologist, who wrote "A Journal of One Hundred Years Ago in the Vicinity of Tulsa." Mr. Gardner locates Euche Creek as the first creek a mile west of Sand Springs. He said he thought he had thus indicated in his topographical map in the Journal. I find that he refers to it in his narrative as being one mile west of Sand Springs but does not show it on his map.

On my trip to the site of old Fort Arbuckle (January 2, 1938) I stopped in the vicinity of this creek, one mile west of Sand Springs, on the Shell Creek road (pavement). The small creek is not labeled but people living near it

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call it Euchee Creek. Mary Fuswa Evans' allotment lies in the creek bottom east of this creek. Mary Fuswa was the daughter of Fuswa Thlocco (Big Bird). At the time I talked with Mary about her father she said the Fuswa-Thlocco family had always lived in that vicinity and had been buried in the old Creek cemetery on the Sand Springs road. A conclusion to this story is the death of Mary Fuswa (Thlocco) Evans about a month ago. Strange to say she was buried in the old Bruner Cemetery southwest of Sand Springs, instead of in the burial ground beside her father, mother and brother, the Creek cemetery on the Sand Springs road five miles west of Tulsa. Lillie Post-oak (wife of Lincoln) told me she was buried there because of the neglected condition of this Sand Springs cemetery.

I noticed yesterday as I passed, the old cemetery is now reduced to a small triangular spot in a large plowed field bordering the highway U. S. 64 - a few graves marked with tombstones, where 200 Creeks were buried in the past.

Mary told me that had Charles Page lived she be-

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lieved he would have carried out his plan to preserve the whole cemetery and that she and her son expected to rest in a vault under the old log house, now a landmark in the cemetery. Maybe this son, Woodrow Wilson Evans, now 14 years old, will in time restore the burial ground of his forefathers (as Mary once tried to do) and make it a final resting place for his mother and himself.

But to return to Lincoln Postoak, so often called "Old Lincoln Postoak", though he acknowledges his 70 or more years, he could easily pass for 60. In appearance a very large, square built man with a rather ruddy complexion. He is crippled, left leg, uses a crutch, but is quite active. He is of a jovial turn of mind and at times in the interview it was hard to tell whether he was in earnest or not.

Postoak recalls the old Osage trail that passed southward from the Claremore country near by where Tulsa is located and followed the north side of the Arkansas to a point where it crossed the river at the mouth of Eucheek Creek, one mile west of what is now Sand Springs. Those

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were the days when he ran the ferry at the mouth of Euchee Creek. After crossing to the south side of the Arkansas the trail ran westward to the mouth of what is now called the Cimarron, then called the Red Fork. From the crossing point of the river the Osage trail led northeast along Euchee Creek and took a course through the southeast corner of Osage County between the present site of Tulsa and Bald Hill, which is about four miles northwest of Tulsa.

I got my directions from Lincoln Post oak and visited the old Fort Arbuckle site (Jan. 2, 1938). This fort, usually called Camp Arbuckle, was established as an outpost by General Matthew Arbuckle in 1834. Though abandoned within the year a block house was erected and certain defensive works started according to General Arbuckle's plan.

I drove to Sand Springs, seven miles west of Tulsa on U. S. 64, then took the paved road due west from Sand Springs called the Shell Creek Road (pavement). Drove three miles west to Wekiwa and then on west on same road for a distance of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles until I came to a road running north (schoolhouse on the left). Turned north on road  $1\frac{1}{4}$

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miles to the Bud Anderson home at top of the hill on the right. The Camp Arbuckle ruins are on his farm. The Anderson home sets back about 50 feet from the road.

Northeast of his house about three or four hundred yards is a mound of rocks and about 50 feet northwest from this pile is a smaller mound. The rest of the large field is plowed ground, in fact, the freshly turned sod creeps up closely to these two small mounds.

The larger mound appeared about 15 feet in diameter, the smaller less than 10 feet. Two small scrub trees and some scraggy buck brushes guard the larger mound. Rather large crumbling rocks are piled up, possibly an old chimney stone site; the other rocks may have been thrown there to make room for the plow share. "The field is the thing in this picture". The mounds of rocks, brought from at least a mile or more north for building purposes, according to James H. Gardner, geologist, are farm hazards now. Mr. Gardner reckons that many tons of building material were hauled to this site, indicating that the builders at the time of its construction expected to be a stockade of

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some permanence.

A contrast can be made as to what has happened to the ruins in the last five years. In February, 1933, according to Mr. Gardner, he found remnants of the old stone chimneys of what appeared to have been a stockade with four or more separate buildings from 50 to 100 feet apart and arranged in somewhat of a quadrangle. The chimney piles were from three to five feet high and from 6 to 15 feet across. He was able to find shards of china-ware, pieces of glass, broken fragments of earthenware, old handmade square nails and fragments of charcoal and bone.

Delving in the debris now is difficult, the rocks are piled so compactly and the mounds have become earth and shrubbery grown. Only these two small patches rise from the large plowed field today. Access to them is difficult as this up-to-date farm belonging to Bud Anderson is well enclosed with "five-strand" wire fences. Mr. Anderson said that plowing had become somewhat easier, what rocks or rather relics appeared had been thrown on the mounds in the past until now he had a pretty well cleared field.

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The site of old Fort or Camp Arbuckle must have been very commanding. It is on a high level location with a timbered area dropping away toward the east and the valley of the Arkansas to the south. Since the old flag pole of Captain Postoak's day is not there some fitting memorial should mark the spot.