

At one time there were many members of both the Beck and Proctor families in the days of the Old Cherokee Nation, and at a time when the two-family feud began. The feud and bad blood was to end years later after several on both sides had been killed. Ezekiel Proctor had a home on Tyner Creek at what is now the little town of Proctor, but he also maintained residence on Flint Creek. He traveled a lot in various capacities. At one time he was a lawman; another time he transported federal prisoners for the Cherokee Nation. Standing in front of the old Mill, Mr. Beck pointed to a little cove northeast about half a mile away and to the foot of a hill southeast of his place about a quarter or so. On different times Zeke Proctor is said to have caught, tried, and executed an outlaw at each of these places, and burying them on the spot. It was at this mill that bad blood between the Becks and Proctors became worse. One of the Beck women, Lucy, was married to a Kesterson. At that time Kestersons were operating the mill. The Kestersons believed that Zeke was responsible for some cattle that disappeared. When Zeke heard of this accusation, he headed for the mill, bent on avenging his honor. When he got to the mill, the two Kestersons were out front and Zeke opened fire without warning. The shot missed Kesterson, but killed his wife instantly. Zeke fled and hid out several months. The Kestersons and Becks continued working to get Zeke brought to trial. According to the treaty between the government and the Cherokees, this was a matter to be tried in the Cherokee courts. The trial was started in the Cherokee court, but the government horned in with an order to bring Proctor in to federal court, dead or alive. In those days most men carried guns, and in this case even those on trial were armed. The U.S. marshalls and posse arrived at the court house to take Zeke, and ran head on into blazing guns. This was the real thing, and not a reenactment of some tale. When the battle was over, eleven men lay dead and several wounded. Zeke was only slightly wounded. The government refused to prosecute Zeke because of the treaty, and finally made a treaty with him to leave him alone if he would become a respectable law abiding citizen. There are those who believe he lived up to the 'treaty' according to the inscription on his monument in Johnson Cemetery.