

Arch H. Ray

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Many years ago there was lots of Pine timber in the Bunch country. The Choate family had a sawmill there, and Ernest Yokum also operated a mill nearby. Many carloads of fine grade pine lumber was cut and shipped out of these hills.

In the days of the Indian Territory Police, one of the prominent lawmen was Capt. Jack Ellis, a Cherokee Indian, who lived near Bunch and resided there all of his life. Capt. Ellis was a fine man and did much to keep the law among the Indians and direct their efforts to more honorable pursuits. Mrs. Ellis was a trained nurse, and for years delivered most of the babies born in these hills. She rode a horse over these rough hills in all kinds of weather, night or day.

Charley Wells and Arch Ray had the only telephones between Stilwell and Sallisaw for a long time when they first came into use, and they were a great advantage in contacting the distant communities. In the old days travel in and out of the Bunch country was difficult and hard. Roads were hardly more than wagon tracks. When the railroad came thru it provided the much needed means of travel and communication. Mr. Ray tells that when a doctor was needed the agent at the depot would telegraph to Stilwell or Marble City, and a doctor would ride in on a passenger or freight train to Bunch. There he would get a horse and ride to attend the sick or injured. If medicine was needed, the request would be called in to one of the towns and the medicine would be sent down by the next train, where it would be picked up at the depot and delivered.

By present day standards Bunch is far removed from the twentieth century areas by distance and its own way of life. But here this is the way these mountain people want to keep their simple and humble way.

The postoffice at Bunch was not the oldest in that area. A few miles north and east was the old community of Flint. The Flint postoffice was established on August 1, 1846 with Gilles Mayes as its first postmaster.