

Travel out of the Briartown country in the early days left much to be desired. Much of the traveling away from home then was to Muskogee, for conducting business with the Indian Agency, to trade and to obtain supplies and provisions. By wagon or by horseback it was usually a two day trip one way. The Russell family maintained an inn at what is now Warner where the travelers would stay overnight. Webber Falls was another of the early day trading posts located on the Arkansas River. He recalls his father telling that he had traveled over the webber Falls bottom when it was just a big swamp. Now this river bottom has been cleared and some of the finest farming land in the country are in this area.

He tells that one of his ancestors was George Lowrey, who lived in the Cherokee Nation of Georgia, carried a message on foot to Canada and returned. It was for this feat that he was commissioned a Major in the Army. Also his grandfather was a Captain in the Southern Army, as was two of his great uncles. Another great uncle was a Colonel in the War of 1812. During Major George Lowrey's time he was one of the signers of many of the treaties between the Cherokees and the government. At one time he was offered the position of Chief of the Cherokee Nation but would not accept it.

In the early days a half breed by name of Porum bought out the interests of Tom Starr which was then known as Starrvilla. Tom Starr owned about everything in the town including the sawmill, grist mill, cotton gin, drugstore, mercantile, and a hardware store. The mother of Dr. McAlister of Muskogee taught school in those early days when it was still Starrvilla. She was from the Austin family.

Long ago there was a meningitis epidemic broke out in that part of the country. Old Dr. Severs could not treat the disease and many were dying. After that he saw a man working at the cotton gin who had pulled his shirt off and revealed a wide scar down the middle of his back, and Emmett asked him how he got it. The man told him that during the epidemic his folks had sent for Tucksie Starr's wife, Allie, who had considerable knowledge of the Indians way of doctoring. Allie looked at the boy who had lapsed into a coma. She sent the father to get turpentine, mutton tallow, and flannel cloth. With the material for treatment, it was applied to the boy's back, and then hot irons were applied. The method of treatment took all the hide off his back, but he did get well. Dr. Stevens heard of the treatment and he also used it and cured many of the sick.

Emmett recalls when he was a little boy going to school he tried to jump over a rattle snake in the trail, but the snake reared up and nipped him. He went home and his leg was swelling badly. His folks sent for his aunt Gertie, a full blood Indian who lived up on the mountain. She came and treated him and the next morning he was able to go to school. He does not remember what she used to treat the snakebite, but does recall she was chanting an Indian song during the treatment. His aunt also treated a neighbor lady, Mrs. Barnes who was bitten by a cotton-mouth moccasin, and she got well. Sonny Donagan had a horse bitten by a diamond-back rattler, and Aunt Gertie also successfully treated the horse. Donagan promised her he would give her the pick of any horse on his ranch if she cured the animal. As far as he knows Aunt Gertie's method of treatment died with her. He recalls that at Aunt Gertie's log house there was many little bundles of Indian medicine hanging around the walls, and she knew a use for them all.