

burning steam locomotives eased to a stop to accommodate passengers, or the freights switched to haul out the fruits of the land and labor. No other smell ever compared to the old mixture of steam engine coal smoke, frying grease and steam that emitted from those old manholes to excite imaginations and hint of adventure to far away places.

At one time Braggs had three doctors to tend the injured, sick and feeble. Floyd remembers Dr. Reece, Dr. Hawkins, and Dr. Jones had offices there at one time or another, along with other doctors who came and went. Some he remembers were there in the horse and buggy days, while others were some of the first to use automobiles when they came into being. He does not recall the doctor's name but relates that one chewed tobacco most of the time and would only spit once in a great while. One day this doctor came back into town after a trip into the country. As a young fellow, Floyd says he would bet on most anything, and so bet a friend that the doctor would not spit before he reached the wooden boardwalk. The doc tied up his horse, got his bag, and came across the street toward his office. Just before he got to the boardwalk he let go and nearly drowned a dog laying in the street. Floyd paid off the four-bits.

In the early part of the 1940s came the military training camp of Camp Gruber to sprawl over 67,000 acres around Braggs. Before this event Braggs, like many places, had not recovered from the depression period of the early 1930s, and many of the business places had closed and many people had moved away. The attendant boom days of wartime military camps there gave no permanent economic help, since the government had taken land right up to three sides of the little towns city limits. The greatest blow was the removal of all families, houses, buildings, schools, churches, and cemeteries from within the military camp. Thousands of people had to move out to find homes in other areas. The majority of these people were Indians who had spent all their life in this hill-country. This uprooting was another in an already long series of acts that further reduced the homeland of the Cherokees of Oklahoma. The majority of Cherokees view the governments acts and decisions with mixed and confused feelings. In just a little more than 60 years the Cherokee Nation was established, grew, and was lost forever.

Floyd tells that the old cemeteries in the area covered by Camp Gruber were moved to various places, some going to South Lethel which is the largest and most used of the Braggs area. Many old burial places that had lost its identity and many unmarked and unknown graves are still on the compound. Having lived in the area all of his life he worked with the cemetery removal crew.

He tells that back in the Indian Territory days not all was peace and quiet in Braggs town. Now and then opposing factions would square off on main street or some other place about and have a shootout. He remembers his father telling that one time a gun fight broke out in town which left 15 men dead. An old timer, who had sat down on the curb nearby to get out of the hot sun contributed that when he came to this town before statehood as a little boy with his family, on one occasion, he said 21 men were killed in one gun fight. With such gross reduction in its male population the town of Braggs did have its problem of growing.