

Among the many events Mrs. Wright has seen include the witness of a tornado. As a young girl in 1908 she was on the north side of Pryor Creek about where the Washie Mayes home is now and saw a tornado coming from the west to strike farm homes on the south side of the creek. Among others, she saw the Franklin home destroyed, and the Wright home wiped out. The Wright family had taken safety in their cellar. She says the house and buildings were sucked up into the funnel and disintegrated. Those hardy people all started anew and rebuilt their homes and barns. Loss was nothing new to the Wrights, as fire had destroyed their home earlier.

In talking about the old families of that neighborhood, she mentions the Tells. There were three boys in the family and each of them married a girl whose first name was Maude. Friends and relatives finally devised a method to separately identify each of the Mrs. Tells, by suffixing their first name with that of the first name of their respective husbands.

Important in the history of eastern Oklahoma was the Military Road dating from about 1820. This road was one of the main avenues of travel in early days from the north, across Indian Territory, and into Texas. Where the road crossed creeks and rivers, these crossings usually were identified by name, such as Pryor Creek Ford. Pryor Creek Ford was located some three miles southeast of their old homeplace.

Mrs. Wright recalls hearing her father tell that in the days before Pryor existed the nearest trading center was at Vinita on that west side of Grand River. Even she can remember when there were only two general mercantile stores in Pryor, and she has watched the town grow to about 10,000 people. In the days when large areas of the river valley was in cultivation, she recalls a period when just about every farmer raised cotton. Then, there were three cotton gins in Pryor, and sometimes it was overnight before unloading.

Hardly two miles to the east of their home was the lands and spacious home of Joel B. Mayes, at one time Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. About a mile north of her home up on Pryor Creek was once the home of Nathaniel Pryor, a trader, Indian Commissioner, and frontiersman. He died at his home there, and far back in the woods is his lonely grave marked in late years by a historical society which reads -"Captain Nathaniel Pryor, Lewis & Clark Expedition 1803, War of Independence 1812, Died June 1, 1831". Here, even before the Indian tribes across the North American Continent were disturbed by the British and French, who called themselves Americans, there were traces of settlement. Only a few places in those early 1800 enjoyed the distinction of having their names mentioned on maps of the period. Included in those few would be Ft. Gibson, Wigwam Neosho, Union Mission, Saline (Chouteaus' Post), and the two sites of the Hopewell Missions.

An area some ten miles square would embrace most of the homeland that Mrs. Wright knew in earlier days. Most of this area was cultivation farm land. She has lived, during these last twenty-five years, to see the country she knew so well undergo a change few other places could have witnessed. In 1942 World War II came close to home for many people, for between Pryor and Chouteau some 20,000 acres of farm land was taken to create the government's Oklahoma Ordnance Works. Every home and farm improvement was removed from that area, destroying forever a way of life for hundreds of people. Again in their history the Indians were moved. For just one Indian family, the Wrights, they watched their lands go: First the Government took 100 Acres in creating a part of the Powder Plant as the Ordnance Works was called, then Grand River Dam Authority took 30 acres, and finally the Ft. Gibson Reservoir and Dam Authority took the remainder of their once 170-acre farm and home.