

Mr. Sitts tells of an event back in his family's history. William Tennessee Baker was his great-grand father. When he was about 60 years old he formed the Baker-Fancier wagon train, gathering a group of some 120 people to go to California. Among others in the wagon train were close relatives of his grandmother, Elizabeth Baker and Sally Gladden. When the wagon train was traveling thru Utah it was attacked. The result is what he relates as the Meadow Mountain Massacre. 120 people were killed, but a few escaped. The year was 1856. For a while Indians were blamed for the massacre, but when the facts were known, it was Mormons who done the crime, with a few hired Indians. The place: near Cedar City, Utah.

Events of the past sometimes leave their mark on a land. Some five miles west of the town of Pryor there is a community called Osage. An Osage community in the middle of the Cherokee Nation required some explaining to the younger generations, but at one time this same area was claimed by the Osage Indians as a part of their hunting grounds, even reaching on east to the Grand River, and on into Arkansas. In the early part of the nineteenth century the Indians had both hands full, fighting the whiteman and fighting each other. In 1817 the Osages were defeated in the Battle of Claremore Mound, by the Arkansas Cherokees. From that time on the Osages and Cherokees managed to keep some distance between them. It is told that at one time an Osage village was located in the area of present Osage Community, and that an Osage Chief is buried on the hill to the west of the present public school. Mr. Sitts recalls that an old Indian told him long ago that the Osage chief's request was honored by the Cherokees in that he wanted to be buried on top of that hill. Some feature of the hill must have pleased him, as the chief had said that some day the white men would come and take all of this country, and that he wanted to be up there where his spirit could watch them destroy each other. The old chief's spirit has seen some of his predictions come, with the whiteman getting all of the Cherokee's land, and now they are after each other. After seeing the increase of big and bigger ranches, reduction of small farms and farming, perhaps the old chief foresaw events to come. Maybe someday all of Mayes County will be owned by one white man.

There was a time when the Cherokee Nation existed, that in the area of Osage Community all of the land was owned by Cherokees. Families of the Vanns, Rowe, Brewer, Mayes, Rudd, Scoggins, and others lived there. Webb Vann was one of these and had a big house up against the hill. Webb farmed and raised cattle and was quite wealthy. About a mile southeast of his home, Webb Vann built a nice churchhouse known then as Vann's Chapel, which he paid for. No Indians, no Indian homes, or no Indian lands are here anymore. The only evidence that this was once Indian country are the Vann's Chapel cemetery and the Anderson cemetery. The Anderson Cemetery was originally the Webb Vann family burial place, but has been taken over by others for private use. Webb Vann was a prominent Indian in his day; having been in the political race for Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation in the election year of 1895 but was beat by Samuel Mayes. One of the principal streets in Pryor is named for Webb Vann.

Mr. Sitts tells that at one time the Mormons came into the Spavinaw country and built the first grist mill, bring'g the burrs from back east. They supposed to have come from a place called Spavinaw Falls, Conn., and some tell that they gave the present town its name. Others tell that the name came from the French explorers and traders. Just northwest of Spavinaw, he tells that there are some Mormon graves near the old Nequa School. He also says that the surnames of West, Young, Smith, etc. came from the early Mormons that were in this country, and many Indians of today have these surnames.