

There were families other than the Starrs who did their part to settle this little part of the Indian Territory. Some of them were the Barnes, West, Davis, Lowrey, Harnett, Berry, Wilson, and Campbell.

One of the most written-about places dealing with the 'west' and 'outlaws' is Younger Bend, a few miles to the west of Briartown. Little can be added to the stories already told in 'western' magazines. Yet, little has been preserved of this historic area, save for Younger Bend School. Not far from the old School is the lonely grave of Belle Starr, whose title "Queen of the Outlaws", goes uncontested. Before her grave was fenced, the souvenir hunters, 'chippers', and others had all but removed the unusual monument. Thru the concern of a Porum barber, a duplicate of the white marble stone was made and placed at the grave. The grave is protected by a concrete vault-like cover, and now it is all enclosed, sides and top, by a chain link fence. Owners of the woodland pasture where the grave is located now forbid visiting the grave unless by special permission. It is not easy to get to the grave as there is no roadway thru the pasture, and the journey by foot is thru weeds, brush, and many stinging nettle plants. Belle Starr's resting place is near her home which was also an outlaw hideout in Younger Bend. The big log house that was her home has long been gone, but it was nearby and was built about 1850 by a full blood named Big Head. Big Head died about 1880 and Belle and Sam Starr moved into the house. During the some nine years that Belle Starr ruled that little spot in the world many things happened, most of which will never be known. Bank and train robberies, shootings and killings, horse stealing, and other activities hardly related to a Tuesday afternoon tea social, were of their way of life and choosing. The stories told of Belle Starr are many, and perhaps the strangest one of all is correct, as it seems almost positive that she met death at the hands of her son. Blue Duck, Jim July, were among Indians who were members of her professional company. But now, the events, the time, and the people are all in the past, and the last of physical evidence that one of those did live is this inscription:

BELLE STARR Born Feb. 5, 1848 Died Feb. 3, 1889.

"Shed not for her the bitter tear,
Nor give the heart to vain regret,
'Tis but the casket that lies here,
The gem that filled it sparkles yet."

No one will ever know the many events that have come to Briartown country, or of the many people who have lived there. Perhaps some will still come to light. Many know about Spring Frog, who died August 31, 1859 at the age of 100 years, but many more never heard of this great Indian of his day. Spring Frog was famous in his time as guide and friend of John James Audobon, one of the greatest painters of birds and nature. Spring Frog was also a war chief, having lead Cherokees against the Osages in the 1820s. In his own right he was a naturalist, perhaps equaled but not surpassed; and his claim to being a successful farmer and stock raiser is unquestioned. Spring Frog is buried in the Briartown Cemetery, and his monument is one of the most unusual - it was recognized and shown in Ripley's "Believe it or Not".