

In its peak growth Okay had a bank, mercantile and general stores, two drug stores, three hotels, lumber yard, cotton gin, truck and implement factory, two railroads and depots, and other business establishments. The KATY (Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad) and the IRON MOUNTAIN (Missouri Pacific Railroad) were the two railroads going through Okay.

In the early days there was much farming in the area. The farmers raised excellent crops of corn, wheat and oats, along with fine prairie hay. Cotton was another important crop raised in the fertile valley. Much grain, hay, and cotton was shipped out of Okay.

Belle West remembers stories told by her mother. During the Civil war her grandfather, Frank Smith, was captured by the Federals in the early part of the war. He was given the choice of working for the Union or going to prison. He chose to work and drove a freight wagon. Shoes were apparently scarce in those days, as she tells that he wore one size 11 shoe and one size 14 shoe. During the winter he told of driving a six-mule team across the frozen rivers. Winters were severe at that time. The family home was near Ft. Gibson during the Civil war. The Union soldiers robbed her grandmother twice. Once they killed seven milk cows and just took the hearts from the carcasses. A Union soldier threatened to kill her and the children, but a Union man who knew the Indian family prevented the tragedy. On the second robbing, the soldiers burned their home. While the house was burning, a soldier tore a string of beads from one of the children's neck and threw them in the fire.

During her parents time, Mrs. West tells of her folks talking about the San Houston place. They believe San Houston's double log house stood on the old Scott place, as did Village Meoshe. Many Indians lived around Village Meoshe and hunted, trapped and fished the rivers. There was a trading post at this Three Forks place and hides, dried fish, and other materials were shipped by river boat. Mrs. West remembers her folks telling about the fine huge fire places in the Houston home. The fireplace mantles were of large one piece polished walnut, and the hearth was of one large smooth stone. The house was made of hewn timbers 12" thick when finished.

Mr. West tells of having lived across the river on Bayou Menard for a while as a young man. It was here that a lime kiln was established to furnish lime for use in making neartar. He remembers also that there was a big stone burial vault on Bayou Menard, but its purpose and those buried there were never known, but dated before the Civil War. There were other cemeteries in the area, the principal ones being at Three Forks School and at Ft. Gibson. However, many families buried their dead in the back yards of their homes. Over the years these old family graves have lost their identity to abandonment of old homes, plowing over the graves, and brush and tree growth.