

walls filled with sawdust. At the river they would saw out blocks of ice and bring them in for storage. The ice would keep well up into the summer. In the days before ice boxes, the refrigerator, and the deep-freeze chest, nature provided for the pioneers.

It was in this area that Mr. Ross grew up with and knew many of the Indian families of his day. Older men of his younger days were of the Cherokee families of Bluebird, Boney, Christie, Balleu, Bat, Welch, and Sanders. A few miles on east in the Rowe Prairie country and the location of the Saline Courthouse were the Duncans (Red Cloud being the most prominent), Blackfox, Spades, Sundays, Rowe, Pickup, Bluebird, Levi, Osage and others.

He reflects on the olden days particularly on the outlook and attitude of people then. He says if someone had sickness the neighbors would come in and take care of his plowing or harvesting, care for the sick, and generally see to their welfare. But he says to-day he cant even hire a man for a little yard work.

He recalls the Indian Territory days in his home community when the only law was what men carried on their hip. A few U. S. Marshals roamed the country. One such was a man named Gillstrap, without whose presence they would have been better off. It was him who turned the Wickliff boys into outlaws. Mr. Ross says the Wickliffs were his friends and they used to come stay all night at his home south of Locust. He tells that he would go to the store and buy ammunition for them. He recalls that those boys were the best marksmen he had ever seen. They could hit a pebble thrown into the air with a rifle shot.

Prominent in early day Indian life in the area was Steve Foreman and Redbird Sixkiller.

Ross says that when he farmed in the valley where the town is now there were trees only on the hilltops and hillsides. But now the whole valley is filled with trees. He remembers the big hay meadows south of where the road is now, and says there used to be hundreds of hay mows standing for winter use. That was long before baling hay came into practice. As a young boy he worked for his uncle in those hay fields running the go-devil and sulky rake. He tells it was always his misfortune to run into a bumble bee's nest.

Before the existance of Locust Grove, Ross tells of an Indian by the name of Chewey (or Tsu-wi) who lived up on the hill east of town. Chewey was wanted for some crime and was known to be mean and nasty with knife and gun. One of his uncles by marriage and another man, Cooley Boley, both also in trouble with the law, were told that they could redeem themselves if they brought in Chewey. One night they went to Chewey's house and, being known to him, were let in. The two men got Chewey to play the fiddle and while so being entertained they shot and killed the man. The law and justice made some strange and confusing turns in those early days.

Man of to-day has not improved on some traditions and self respect. Ross cites the matter of a man's word. In the early days of this Cherokee Nation when a man gave his word, it could be depended upon and no signed agreement was needed. He tells that men sentenced for punishment following trials at the Cherokee Capitol at Tahlequah would be released on their word to return on a certain day to receive punishment, usually at the whipping tree or to be hung. With no bond or contract, the offenders never broke their word. A far cry from this day when many find it so easy to lie thru their teeth with no conscience.