

The elements did not always shine on Murphy with bounty. In 1911 one of the worst droughts visited. Corn withered on the stalk before it could mature, wheat and oats never had a chance. Grass powdered under a foot step. Water was low. To get by, many people hacked ties and hauled them to the railroad at Chouteau.

After that year, the people began to recover with work on the railroad in progress. A demand for ash lumber came from buyers for the handle industry added more to their economy. Farming again was resumed, and the cornbread and sowbelly diet was supplemented. As soon as the railroad was ready saw logs, grain, hay, handle wood, railroad ties, and livestock began shipment from Murphy. The community sufficed along with hot summers, bad winters, high water, insects, and other annoyances which they took in stride.

Mr. Layton recalls times when hauling ties to the railroad at Chouteau their wagons would bog down to the hub in the mud and could only haul six ties which they sold for 15¢ each. When they could they would ford the river rather than pay for crossing the ferry. He would look forward to getting to Chouteau town as he could buy a loaf of light bread for 5¢, which sometimes was his noon meal.

Before Ft. Gibson dam was built there was a <sup>negro</sup> settlement down by the river. They too were sucked up in the draft of the government's construction venture and all moved away, except old Eli Toller. Eli is now about 90 years old and lives in a little cabin up on the hillside northwest of Murphy. He lives by himself and frequently someone goes to see about him.

No one remembers when, but long ago a Cherokee by name of Adair established a cemetery at the west edge of Murphy. In their eager-beaverness, the government survey for the Ft. Gibson reservoir did not spare the old burial ground, though high water has never even come near the place. In the process of clearing out the timber, buildings and other things within the bounds of Ft. Gibson Reservoir, The Adair Cemetery, along with the Fisher and one other old Indian burial places were moved up on the hill a mile and a half east of Murphy.

Mr. Layton recalls the early schools of the area. The first school he attended was at Cedar Bluff a couple miles south on Spring Creek. Later a frame building was constructed at Murphy for their first school. In the W.P.A. days a large stone building was put up which served as Murphy School until it too fell before ~~the~~ the government. This fine large school building was the pride of the community and was located just west of the town. It was just 100 feet inside the staked boundary of the Reservoir, but that made no difference, as in the government's way of doing things it was unthinkable to indent just one block to save and let the school continue. Another school was built just across the road in the ancient method of box construction, but it did serve the purpose. Now it too is gone, as the state's program of consolidation now has school busses from Locust Grove come to take the children to school.