

STONE SNAKE ON RED HILL

Do you know whether that big petrified snake is still on Red Hill, or did they take it to a museum?

Jess: Well, the last time I took Dr. Truman Michelson, the anthropologist from the Smithsonian Museum--but somebody had chipped the head off. It was coiled about high and coiled about that big--snake--and the head was laying this way. And somebody--looked like--there was a fresh mark looked like made with a ax or something--had chipped the stone off. I know I took him up there in 1934, I believe it was. It turned to solid petrified stone.

Bob: I heard that probably it had been removed and taken to the museum.

Jess: It might have been.

Bob: But evidently those snakes were much larger there than anywhere else.

Jess: Oh yeah. Well, in 1893, that's the year after we settled down on our allotments, a young Indian that was one of the interpreters of the Agreement of 1890, Paul Bointon--he took his allotment right there east of El Reno Parkview Hospital--that was his allotment. But his folks lived southwest of Greenfield, and Watonga started in 1893. Just a small town. He was riding up there and he saw two or three white men up there and he watched them. He was riding by there. So he stopped and got off and went over there and said, "What are you doing? What are you fellows doing?" They said, "We just got a snake out here. We were going to haul it to Watonga but there's just two of us and would you help us?" "Where is that thing?" "It's back here." They had a rope around its neck. And that snake had a kind of warty-like horn on its nose. And that snake was as big as a stovepipe. And he said he stepped four times the length of that snake. Evidently--eventually--they couldn't handle that snake so they shot it and killed it and took it off to Watonga. That's probably one of those snakes that was petrified up there on one of those hills. But he told my folks about that, and the old man, my dai, said, "Yes, in the early days when we used to range our ponies up there, some mornings we