

who came for the four-day event. This event was held annually until the early 1920s when the Indians began leaving, when prosperity was at a low ebb throughout the postwar days of the country, farm produce prices had dropped to a low figure, hardly repaying for seed. Many Indian farms were swallowed up by mortgages, loan companies, and the ever-present land hungry cattlemen.

Turning back to the more pleasant days of Okoee Indian Fair, Mrs. Burge tells that people would bring all kinds of things they grew, raised or made to trade or sell. A good program of rodeo events each day added the excitement factor. There was the usual sideshows of the little traveling carnivals who were present each year. She recalls one year there was a tight wire act. Something went wrong with the equipment and a man fell several feet and hit against a tree. His back was broken and he died when he fell. The Dog Show was one of the events that was long remembered. Some years as many as 500 hunting dogs would be shown. The dogs would be entered in field trials, obedience contests, and trailing events, sometimes lasting all night up into the next day. Prized dogs were bought, sold, and traded for small fortunes.

John Tucker was one of the prominent Cherokees of the community, having been operator of a trading post, as well as the first postmaster of Okoee, but most of his time was devoted to farming. His home was a big log house about half a mile northwest of Okoee. It was John Tucker who established the graveyard at Okoee where many of the Indians of the old days were buried, and the cemetery bears the Tucker name to-day, and is kept up by some of his decedents. Mrs. Burge well remembers Grandma Tucker, the full-blood Cherokee matriarch of early day Okoee. During the flu epidemic of World War One when so many died, Mrs. Burge learned a preventative against flu and colds. Grandma Tucker instructed her to always keep a little pan of cedar leaves and twigs on the back of the stove, where they would smoke a little, but not burn, or just give off an essence of cedar odor. One says this was done and as best as she can remember her family and the Tuckers were of the few who did not get sick that winter. Even to-day Mrs. Burge keeps a little pan of cedar on the stove.

The little stores and facilities at Okoee could not always furnish the full needs of its trade. To sell livestock, farm products, or for buying farm and home needs Wichita was the nearest trading center, and an all day trip by wagon. Perhaps the little country stores and little early day villages were never meant to survive. The last store in Okoee run by Ted Long closed its doors in the late 1940s. All that remains to-day are the some ten or so dwellings near the old town. Northeast Oklahoma has been battered by the existence of this little village, and having served its purpose, Okoee now lies peacefully at rest, remembered with affection by those who knew it well in a day in the past.