

The early days of Whiteoak Frank recalls that the town was on the north side of the railroad. In later years the town moved over on the south side of the tracks and farther up on the hill where it is to-day. At one time it was a prosperous little village. It had three or four stores, and several other business places, a railroad depot, stockyards, and a school. About all that remains now is one store and the school. In earlier days it was a shipping point for strip-mined coal, cattle, and hay. All of these activities have now passed on into history.

(Note: The skip on the tape is due to a broken wire in the microphone.)

At some time in the early history of the Whiteoak country, there was a family by the name of Bender who lived on the main road thru the country. There was the mother and father, a big ole girl, and a half wit boy. It was told that drummers and other travelers would sometimes stop there to stay all night. If the family learned that the travelers were carrying money, they would knock them in the head and bury them in the garden. Finally, the lawmen got to checking on the disappearance of some men and suspicion pointed to the Benders. The Benders loaded up and took off, but were caught down toward Muskogee. The suspects were being taken to Kansas to stand trial, but for some reason they were killed near what is now Pheasant Hill School, five miles north of Vinita. In consideration for the girl it is said that a rock was placed over her head before filling the grave. In much later years, an oil well crew was building a slush pit near the old school and uncovered four graves, one of the bodies had a flat stone over the head. It is believed that this was the Bender family.

In speaking of the old school that they attended, Frank remembers one school they called Contrary School. It was not much of a building, and one window did not have any glass, so they kept a bale of hay stuffed in the opening during the winter. Another school of the area of the older days was Woodman Hall.