

. PROCTOR, ZEKE

FIRST INTERVIEW

#7697

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Gus Hummingbird,
Interviewer.
Sept. 30, 1937.

An Interview With Zeke Proctor,
THE MAJOR RIDGE MURDER.

The account of the murder of Major Ridge was told to Zeke Proctor by his mother, Eliza (Elizabeth) Jane Proctor.

This murder was committed in Arkansas just about a mile from Indian Territory. A mob waylaid Major Ridge on the road between Cincinnati and Fort Smith, at a small brook called White Rock. There is a school near the scene by that name.

Major Ridge operated a store near Neosho, Missouri. He was on his way to Fort Smith when he was killed. He had a small colored boy with him.

The boy told about the killing at Dutchtown which was a Dutch settlement. The people came and took him. They buried Major at Piney Cemetery.

At that time there were only two graves at Piney; one Mexican and a Cherokee having been buried there, Major was the third person buried there.

Several years later they dug up Major and hauled the remains away. No one knows where he is now buried.

Zeke Proctor is the grandson of Duncan O'Bryant, the first missionary to the Cherokees, ^{who} lived in what was called later Goingsnake District.

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At the time that Major Ridge was killed the Proctor family lived just across the line in the Indian Territory from Arkansas near the present town of Dutch Mills, Arkansas. At that time this town was called Dutchtown because this was a settlement of Dutch people.

It is true that Proctor was not living at that time, but his mother and all of his aunts were living. This murder was committed about a mile from where they lived over in Arkansas.

His folks went to the scene of the murder and helped bury Major Ridge at Finney Cemetery.

Cale Wright was present when ten years later some men posing as government men came to dig up the body of Major Ridge. Then twelve years later Virgil O'Dare, a relative of the family, was present when they dug up a piece of plank and five shovels of dirt which was supposed to have been the remains of Major Ridge, and hauled it away.

No one ever knew among the Cherokees where these remains were taken. Some Cherokees of today would like to know where they took the remains for burial.

There are some people living today, real descendants of the mob who killed Major Ridge, who know all about this

and will continue to know as long as there is one of
them alive. This hatred over this killing was one cause
of the separation of the Cherokees in politics.