

Launcey C. Moore, Supervisor
 Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

March 25, 1937

J. B. Bigby
 Field Worker

Interview: Sam J. Starr, Sr.
 Stilwell, Oklahoma

EARLY DAY HORSE RACING

The Starrs have always been men who were interested in good stock. This was true when it came to the race horse and Sam J. Starr, Sr. owned and ran one of the best ever run in this part of the Cherokee Nation, now Adair County, Oklahoma. This particular animal that I refer to was known as "Gray Alice". She was bred in 1875 to about 1885. She was a cross-breed between the Argyle, which is a horse that will run a mile (known as a one mile horse) which must have great endurance and the Shiloh, which is a horse that only runs 1/4 mile (known as a 1/4 mile horse) which must be very quick. By crossing these two breeds, Sam Starr had an animal which was quick and had the endurance too.

Mr. Starr has a photograph of "Gray Alice" on the wall in his room, which we were allowed to see. When you listen to Mr. Starr tell about her, you are convinced that she was more than a beauty, being fleet of foot and also having the endurance necessary for the race.

The first race that "Gray Alice" ran was at the race track hollow, some ten miles northeast of Mr. Starr's home, a place where most of the races were held those days in this part of the country. This race was matched for the sum of \$500.00 and was easily won by "Gray Alice".

When the day for the race arrived, there was much betting done on both sides. The bets were in value from a jack knife to the sum of \$500.00 in all.

These races caused much excitement and sometimes fights.

The next race for this mare was run at Siloam Springs, Arkansas. This time the bet was \$500.00, won by "Gray Alice".

The next and last race she ran was at Gilcom Springs and this time the bet was \$1500.00, which was easily won by "Gray Alice". The last race was matched by Mr. Starr without him even seeing the other horse. He was not able to match another race.

Way C. Moore, Supervisor
Pioneer History, 3-149

March 20, 1937

Dodson
Worker

THE HOMESTEAD OF SAM J. STARR, SR.

The home of Sam J. Starr, Sr. is one and one-half miles south of Stilwell, Oklahoma, Adair County, in what is called a mountain valley and near the spring which the city of Stilwell is watered. This is a spring which has very few equals in this county, even though it is more fortunate than most places as to good springs, for there are many, but this one furnishes water of the best quality and the supply almost unlimited. This spring is known as "The Starr Spring".

The home of Mr. Starr is one of the largest and most beautiful homes in the county, for a nice up-to-date home has been one of the thoughts of the Starr family from early times until now.

Back when the country was thinly peopled and when neighbors, even the near-lived some distance apart, it was there that the Starr home was the place of entertainment of the young and the old, a home of true southern hospitality. Around this fine home is a nice grove of large, native trees of oak, hickory, ash, walnut and other common in this country. It is what may be called a well kept with no underbrush or unsightly objects, making the homestead one of the prettiest and best kept homesteads in the country. Then to back this up the homestead prosperous and keep abreast with the times, there is also one of the largest and most fertile tracts of land to be found in this county. This is situated in Secs. 10, 11, 14 and 15, T. 15, N. 35 E, a farm of several hundred acres in a high state of cultivation, being farmed by the most up-to-date methods to be found here.

Mr. Starr has always taken a keen interest in farming and stock raising, and has been the lead in introducing the more modern things for the farm and ranch. He

always, while on the farm, raised large acreages of wheat, corn, oats and different kinds of hay, alfalfa, timothy, clover, soy beans, etc.

Here on this farm you see several hundred white-faced cattle (Herfords), bred hogs, and one of his hobbies, the large flock of white Leghorn chickens.

His above management, interest in his home and farm dates back to his early

Sam J. Starr, Sr. was born in Musk County, Texas, October 23, 1857. He came to this neighborhood with his father when 10 years old. He is the son of George M. Starr who was born in Tennessee and mother, Nancy Bell Starr, also born Tennessee. His father was a Cherokee of 1/4 blood and his mother 1/4 blood.

Starr, Sr. married Miss Ruth McClure, a Cherokee of 1/16 blood. They are the parents of three children, namely, George E., M. C. and Samuel Joseph.

Sam J. Starr, Sr. was educated in the common schools at Muddy Springs, Flint Creek, Cherokee Nation, Cane Hill, Arkansas, and the National Male Seminary at Evansville, Indiana. He has always considered himself a farmer even while he was engaged in the General Mercantile business with his father-in-law, Mr. McClure, at Evansville, Arkansas. He kept his farming interest going, keeping folks on his farms and would take care of them as he wished them to.

He relates back fifty to sixty years ago that cattle raising was very inexpensive as there were vast cane breaks on Lees Creek, Sallisaw Creek, especially about Dwight Mission. These cane breaks would keep the cattle fat through winter and the abundance of good grass kept them fat through the summer. These cattle, being raised without much expense, gave them a very profitable business. Stock sales were the main things to bring in the money.

They drove the cattle to Neosho, Mo. and Springfield, Mo. From these places they were shipped to Chicago and other markets.

Hogs were another source of easy income as the range was good for hogs. They were driven to Van Buren and Ft. Smith, Arkansas and sold usually in the fall.

Mr. Starr is a highly respected gentleman, loved by all who know him. He has always taken great interest in his church. He is a Methodist.

No. 2166

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Mauncey C. Moore, Supervisor
Adair-Pioneer History, S-149

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F. Dodson,
Field Worker

Interview: Sam J. Starr, Sr.

SOME HERBS USED BY THE CHEROKEES FOR MEDICINE

The Butterfly Weed is a herb which was and still is common in Adair County, Oklahoma. It is found in the meadows and fields, rarely found in the thick woods. It grows from 15 to 30 inches high and is about as large as a common lead pencil. The leaves are about 1/2 inch wide and about 3 inches long, which grow close together from near the ground to the flower, which is at the top. The flower is made of many small flowers and is about three inches across and is round.

This herb is called the "Butterfly Weed" because its flower, when viewed from a distance, closely resembles the butterfly, posed.

Tea was made of the roots and given as a cure for pneumonia, pleurisy, colds, chills and long standing cases of malaria, such as yellow jaundice.

The common mullen was used for colds and chills.

Ground huckleberry or Fever Weed is a small plant that grows in the woods. It grows up about 4 inches high, usually several stems from the same root. Its leaves resemble the winter huckleberry, only much smaller. It was used as a cure for fever.

Poisonous snake bites were treated by the "Madstone" and sometimes conjured by the conjurer or "Medicine Man".

Tea made of the Spicewood shrub was used in treating the measles.

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W. F. Dodson
Field Worker

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INDIAN POLICE

We are told by Mr. Starr that Indian police in the Indian Territory had certain territory to cover and to keep order, make arrests and bring the people accused of crime to court for trial and that they functioned very much as did the U. S. Marshal.

The ones named by Mr. Starr are:

Lark Bean

R. L. (Dick) Taylor

John Brown

George Ferguson

Red Rogers

Howell Rogers

Lud Leadbetter

Gene Denton.

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THE HUNT OF SIXTY YEARS AGO

Mr. Starr and his neighbors would often go on the hunt in different parts of what is now Adair County, Oklahoma but their favorite place for the deer hunt was in what is known as the Hunt Mill Hollow which is in the south-east part of Adair County. Here, he says, they always found deer. Here they could camp for several days, kill several deer, bring some home with them.

Turkey hunting might be done almost anywhere in the country as they were plentiful even around the home.