

~~STARR, DANIEL~~ INTERVIEW

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"WAH*SAH-SHEE WA-KE"

An interview of Daniel Starr, age 85,
Arbeka town (tulwa), Henryetta, Okla.

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"Wah-sah-shee" is a Muskogee-Creek or it is used by the tribe when meaning or relating to any wild tribe of Indians outside of the tribes including those composing the present known civilized tribes as they are known. In many cases, this reference to "Wah-sah-shee" is most used when talking about the Osage tribe.

"Wa-ke" is a word meaning 'lying down' which to be used in the case herein means 'resting place' so that when the two words "Wah-sah-shee Wa-ke" are used together would complete the meaning 'Resting Place of the Wild Indian' which is used only with reference to a lone grave of some wild Indian killed during some raid or battle in the early days.

Many such ~~known~~ sites of graves are known and were known to have been scattered in the various places over the Indian Territory and Oklahoma. The stories of these lone graves were told, some were crudely marked

by piles of stones, while others having no kind of a mark have long since the early days become extinct and all traces of any graves have disappeared.

Reports are given that such lone graves were located in Okmulgee County northeast of Henryetta, north of Boley, southeast of Okemah and near Bryant in Okfuskee County.

These wild Indians were the victims of warring bands of Muskogee-Creek Indians. It is related that these many occurrences took place when the Indian Territory was being populated by Indians coming from Alabama and before the Civil War days. It is further told that when the Muskogee-Creeks had killed their so-called wild Indian victims, they would bury them on the spot where they had been killed.

Near Bryant and Henryetta, Oklahoma, the Osage and Muskogee-Creek Indians met in many battles. Such strikes were numerous along the hills in this vicinity and on along down to what is now Dustin vicinity. This was a free range providing the horses and livestock belonging to the Muskogee-Creeks abundant grazing space.

The Osages were living in western Oklahoma in those early days and they made many trips to Texas and anywhere they wanted into Indian Territory. There was a main route they traveled that had been named the Osage Trail. The Creeks owned many ponies that caught the eyes of the Osages who had seen them in the possession of the Muskogee-Creeks when they had rambled through the country. It was no hard task for the Osages to invade the Muskogee-Creek country to drive off the ponies. The Muskogee-Creeks would pursue the Osages and would go into battles with them which resulted in deaths of both sides or the scattering of the bands.

My father, Ben Starr, known also as Tu-sek-a-ya Hut-ke of Arbeka town (tulwa) had come from Alabama during the removal and he was often a member of the forces of the Muskogee-Creeks that warred with and made raids on the Osages. There is one grave that marks one credit to his name. My father pursued a fleeing Osage from the scene of battle, shots being exchanged. They had gone quite a ways before my father came upon the Osage who had fallen from his horse in

in a weakened condition as one of his shots had taken effect. It did not take long for my father to end the remaining life of the Osage.

Crazy Snake, known also as Chitto Harjo, was my uncle belonging to the Alligator clan. He was the leader of an old treaty band. He had established council grounds southeast of Henryetta known as the Hickory Ground busk grounds where he camped for days at a time to attend to the business councils with his people. Not only Indians made up his people at this particular time as many negroes had been included or had joined in his band.

I was constantly urged and reminded by my uncle that I must cherish and keep on the stand for the old Indian rights as he was. Many a time I would go in his company to the home of Ispahecha where I would listen for hours at a time to their lengthy discussions on matters dear to the hearts of the Older Indians who were maintaining strong beliefs and stand for the continued existence of the old Indian laws.

It seemed to me that those old cherished Indian

laws could not be in existence for long although all the older Indians had either sided in for the new ways or for the old tribal laws which the Indians had great faith and love. There were too many white people coming into the Indian Territory to even think that the Indians could keep on with the tribal laws.

When I expressed my opposition against my uncle's views, he finally gave up trying to win me to his side so that he went so far as to disown me.

The councils were repeatedly held with Chitto Harjo as the leader. These councils were continued until some of the members of Harjo's band began to commit thievery of meats and any other things. They were requested by officials to cease these acts but when they didn't stop, the officials with other interested people took steps to stop them.