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E. F. Dodson
Field Worker

Interview: J. W. Ferguson

A CAMPING PLACE OF THE JAMES AND YOUNGER BOYS

In the year 1912, Cole Younger, one of the James and Younger band, made a tour through this county (Adair). A few days before he came to Stilwell, he wired to J. W. Ferguson who was then city marshal of Stilwell, Oklahoma and who is now sheriff of Adair County, Oklahoma, to engage a team and buggy and be ready to accompany him on some trips out in the country near Stilwell, as he wished to again see some of the places that he had visited in the early days when the James boys, his brother and he had passed through there.

Mr. Ferguson made the arrangements and when Cole Younger arrived he told Mr. Ferguson that back just after the Civil War, the James and Younger band had camped near where Stilwell now stands and that while here they watched a horse race with the Starr boys (perhaps Buck and Zeke Starr) and that before the race they were told that the Starr boys had said that they intended to take the money whether they won or not. Of course, this was not true, but they made preparation to take care of any emergency, as was common with them, but when time for the race came and the race started, it was plain that Starr's horse would win as it led all the way. The James and Younger boys paid off and of course everything went off peacefully.

As to the trips out around Stilwell, it had been several years since Cole Younger had been here and they visited several springs around here before they came to the place where they had camped. When they came to the large spring on the property now owned by George Bradley, on the northeast side of Stilwell, he readily recognized it as the place where they had camped.

Cole Younger said that his old band had passed through this part many times, especially when on their way from the north to the Younger Bend on the