

FOLSOM, ADAM.  
WARD, JOHN W.

MEDICINE SPRINGS.

7583

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WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field worker's name Pete W. Cole

This report made on (date) September, 22. 1957

1. Name ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Medicine Springs ( an Indian Church)

2. Founded (date)                      By                     

3. Abandoned (date)                      Why abandoned                     

4. Present owners of premises John W. Ward.

Address of present owners                     

NOTE: Answer fully, if possible, questions 5 to 13 inclusive, here or on sheets firmly attached to this form.

- 5. Original owners of premises. Willis Tobly.
- 6. Give names of other persons who at one time owned the premises.
- 7. Approximate number of graves.
- 8. Approximate number of marked graves
- 9. General condition of headstones, including inscriptions.
- 10. Number of inscriptions copied and attached.                      (Place each inscription on a separate sheet and attach all to this form).
- 11. Any other information you were able to gather about the burial ground including its history.
- 12. Condition of the premises
- 13. Detailed location of burial ground.

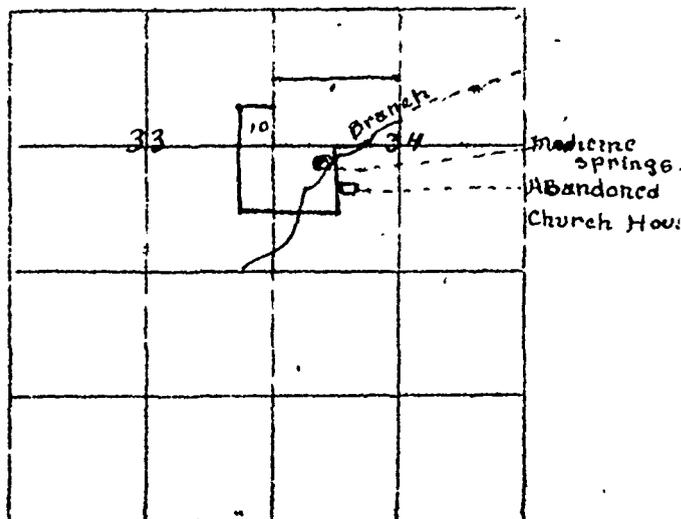
14. Legal location of burial ground, County                     

Section 34 Township 2 N. Range 11E

(north)

The plat on this form represents 640 acres, one square mile, and is subdivided into 40 acre tracts. The center of the section, and burial ground should be located accordingly. If possible, make additional subdivisions on plat to give more accurate location.

Number of sheets attached  
to this form                     



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FIELD WORKER PETE W. COLE  
Indian-Pioneer History S-149  
September 22, 1937.

MEDICINE SPRING, AN INDIAN CHURCH,  
ONCE A PLACE OF MEETING OF "ISHKI OSHTA"  
OR A BAND OF SNAKE INDIAN PARTY.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ADAM FOLSOM,  
a full blood Choctaw Indian who  
lives a short distance from this  
place. Also an interview with  
John W. Ward of near Coalgate, Oklahoma,  
the present owner of land.

Adam Folsom of near Cairo, Oklahoma, who lives  
near Medicine Spring Indian Church, now abandoned, in  
his knowledge of the condition and the surrounding  
premises states as follows:-

After the enrollment of the Five Civilized  
Tribes of Indians, particularly Choctaws in this  
case, to be allotted lands to them by the United  
States Government, there were few Choctaws who op-  
posed this movement, as well as those who were against  
Indian Territory to become as a state. Being oppos-  
ed to the movement of what the Government is to do,  
there was an organization or party formed by these  
people who declared themselves, as against the allot-

ment of lands to the Indians and declared themselves "A Band of Snake Indians" or "Ishki Oshta Clan," and would not yield to the allotment of lands. They were in favor of the land to be held in common, not to be owned by any one individual, firm or corporation, that one may move on any certain piece of land to make improvements and live on as his home. If he desired to move to some new location, he had the privilege of selling the improvement, but that he was not required to dispose of the land.

This was some of the ideas that these parties or clans had written in their constitution they had adopted; hence they did not care to be interfered with by the government. It was at this time when the government allotted Willis Tobly, a full-blood Choctaw Indian, one hundred fifty acres of homestead land where he finally lived and made this his home until he died.

Mr. Tobly was a Methodist minister and a leader of the band of Snake Indian Clan, who finally settled

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down on this tract of land that the Department had set aside for him. After settling down, he held several Snake Clan Meetings where Creeks, Seminoles and Cherokees participated in holding of these meetings, and a big feast was given to the public and a grand time was had, although no one was allowed to look on while the meeting was in session only the members. Most of the people in the community with the influence of Willis Tobly belonged to this organization. Later the organization was disbanded.

The neighbors in the settlement wanted to build a church house and Tobly and Andy Frazier, another church member, Jackson Durant, and several others organized a church and named it Medicine Spring. There were meetings held at this place for several years until Mr. Tobly and Mr. Frazier could not agree on setting aside a few acres of land for church purpose, when Mr. Frazier withdrew his membership and transferred to another Methodist Church.

Brother Tobly was later transferred to Haskell County by the Conference, where he lived and died.

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The community and members of Medicine Spring have either died out or moved away. The church was moved to another location and nothing now remains at the old site where once strong delegates of members of the Snake Band of different tribes held their meetings here, fighting for what they thought was right.

#### MEDICINE SPRINGS

When the country was still wild, or rather there was no improvement, there was a branch which ran through on a side of a hill and water was seeping through to the top of the surface. There was a man named Jackson Durant dug a spring at this place and before going down many feet struck water which was cool and clear. It was mineral water which was laxative, and more so at a certain period than at other times. It is this spring of mineral water that the church was named after in Tobly's days, the Medicine Spring of "Oka Alickhe" (Choctaw name).

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This spring was found several years ago as can be shown by an incident that happened in 1874, a short time after the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad was built through this section of the state. A man who was living at Stringtown at that time met a man in Denison, Texas, who had rheumatism so bad that it did not seem as though he would live long, and who wanted to come to this spring. The Stringtown citizen brought the Denison man in a wagon to this spring but there were no houses for miles around, but all in wilderness. The Stringtown man left the man from Denison there to die, not realizing for a moment that he would ever see him any more.

Two or three years later, a large fat strong husky stranger met the Stringtown man and recognized him as the one that had hauled him in a wagon to the spring. After introduction and a few words exchanged, the Denison man identified himself as the same man that was left at the Medicine Spring to take the treatment and recover or die. He was cured of his ailment there.

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Mr. John W. Ward of near Coalgate, Oklahoma, is now the owner of land who now is planning to make a summer resort to the public. There have been picnics and other entertainments being held at this place every year.

Doctor E. N. Wright in his life time analyzed this water and was interested in the improvement until he died a few years ago and nothing more has been done.

(Note: Pete W. Cole writes his interviews in Indian vernacular so direct in meaning that no effort is made to correct his manuscripts, fearing to lose their Indian value ED).