

The engineer was shoveling coal into the fire box and steam was rising -----"They'll never start it," and the mountaineer said --- "It's too big ^{and} heavy".

Finally it did start, going away with a series of whistles and exhaustive pulls. "They'll never stop it" the mountaineer said,---- It's too big and heavy." That Sunday School organized by a bunch of sinners, grew, and grew, and grew ---- they never stopped it; it is going strong today ----not a session has been missed since that memorable day." A substantial church was later built and still later a fine brick school house. In the meantime, Mr. Kittrell has kept the horses shod and plows, wagons, and other farm implements in repair. The "Village Smithy" still stands. Of course modern methods have been adopted, the old shop has, to a certain extent, been turned into an automobile repair shop, and younger men ---- Mr. Kittrell's sons, do most of the work, but the "Old Village Blacksmith is usually on hand ----well along in years, but he retains his sunny disposition, and takes delight in telling his story.

His daughter, Mattie, than a babe in arms, is now the wife of Edgar Riggs, brother of the famous Play-wright, Lynn Riggs, and has a nice home on one of the principal resident streets at Claremore.

Mr. Kittrell was well acquainted with Alfred Foyil, the man who founded the town which bears his name. He says Mr. Foyil was a fine old gentleman, but eccentric. The story, as gathered, is something like this; Alfred Foyil, a native of the state of Georgia, enlisted in the Confederate Army when a very young man and served until the strife was ended ---- finding himself stranded at Fort Smith, ~~Arkansas~~, a husky young man, ragged and down at the heel" but industrious and ambitious. Not being able to find a position, he got a job chopping cotton over in the Cherokee Nation, a few miles south from the present city of Sallisaw, in what is now Sequoyah County. In due time he met a girl ---- a pretty little Cherokee girl, Miss Charlotte Choate. In a few months she became his wife and they began life in a log cabin on the banks of the Arkansas River. Working together they "cleared up" a few acres of fertile land and

proceeded to "make a crop". Wild animals were plentiful---game, such as squirrels, quails, etc, which were easy to find, while fishing was all that the heart could ask for. They lived bountifully, but groceries --- sugar, coffee, salt, soda, etc, had to be procured from Fort Smith, fifteen or twenty miles down the river. Being resourceful, and out of money, Mr. Foyil saved the skins of the wild animals he caught, as well as such of the flesh that was marketable, loaded the same into a boat and went down the river on a trading expedition. Fort Smith merchants had market for his products and would trade merchandise for them. It was a real man's job poling and rowing a loaded boat up the river to his young wife and their humble little home, but in due time he made the grade and things went merrily on---it was only a log cabin but the little Indian wife liked it and the "heap of living" therein made it a home, a real happy home for him.

But he went on with his hunting and fishing when not busy in his "crops" and other trips to Fort

Smith followed. The Foyil family soon had a surplus of groceries and their neighbors wanted to buy, rather than make trips to the city, thus the little home became a "country store" --- the wife trading with or selling to the neighbors, while Alfred went on with his farming, hunting, and fishing. In a year or two a small two-room store building was erected near-by and to meet the demands, Mr. Foyil induced an old-time doctor and a blacksmith to locate near his store. They all prospered and a Post Office, called "Red Lands" was established with Mr. Foyil as Post Master.

Ten years later Mr. Foyil sold his possessions on the banks of the Arkansas to a man named Hayes for fifteen thousand dollars. He then visited Claremore ----that in 1888----and proceeded to look the country over, hoping to establish a ranch. He selected the site where the town of Foyil now stands and bought the holdings of the original settler---- Thomas F. Ward, a Cherokee citizen now gone to his reward, but whose widow, "Aunt Lizzie" Ward, still lives in that community.

Mr. Foyil moved his wife and her baby -----
Milo Foyil who has for the past several years been employed in the State School Land Department at Oklahoma City, to their new home. Soon, the pioneer hut purchased from Mr. Ward gave way to a commodious frame house, two stories high with a basement and modern conveniences. He acquired many head of cattle, as well as horses, hogs, and goats, and the ranch was a reality.

The Frisco Railroad ran through his lands, but the nearest shipping points or Post Offices were Claremore and Chelsea, the former ten miles south, the latter about the same distance north. But Mr. Foyil liked to have things a "little more convenient" so he entered into negotiations with the Railroad to build a side track and loading rack in his pastures for his convenience in receiving and shipping out cattle. The Foyil ranch was going strong when the "Cherokee Strip Payment" approached. Seeing the opportunity to buy and sell to advantage he proceeded to put in a store stocked with staple merchandise and people for miles around

came to his place to trade. He went to Springfield, Missouri, and arranged with the Holland Financing Company to finance a project and he sold thousands of dollars worth of merchandise to be paid for out of the "Strip Payment" and when the final payment was actually made at Claremore, in 1895, Alfred Foyil walked out with something like fifty thousand to the good. Then improvements followed----a larger store was built, a blacksmith shop was opened, a hotel erected, grist mills installed and a Post Office established with Alfred Foyil as Postmaster.

Hugh Davis, a crippled man, was placed in charge of the store and Post Office with Wilson Davis, "Bill Lewis" and sometimes another as clerks to wait on customers. Dr. Tinsley another Confederate, came in from Missouri and located at Foyil----He was a grand old Physician of the old school----the type who got out at night, rode for many miles on a horse to rural homes and actually cured people. He died at Foyil about 1927 at the advanced age of 97,

his wife, Aunt Millie, lived five years after his death. About 1901 "Willie Harper", now a practicing attorney in Claremore, arrived from a year of adventure in Central America, where he had seen sights in a Revolutionary Army. The young adventurer and the aged merchant soon became fast friends and he was placed in charge of the accounts and collections, as well as looking after the correspondence. He remained there until about 1907 when the business was liquidated.

Mr. Foyil and his wife "Aunt Charlotte" had but one child of their own. At least three orphan girls found a home with them----they were Alice Bolen, a white girl, now the wife of W. P. Payne, Rogers County's first Registrar of Deeds; Minnie Buckner and Elsie Surratt, both of Cherokee blood. Miss Buckner became the wife of William Richard Holland and still lives at Foyil, while Miss Surratt married W. B. Harper, (the "Willie" Harper referred to above) and they lived together for many years---

until she passed away.

Mr. Kittrell tells an amusing story about squirrel hunting, which was a favorite past-time in the olden days. He with a double barrel shot-gun, Mr. Foyil, with his Winchester, and Dr. Tinsley with his new "32 Marlin Repeater" and E. L. Pearce, a young Physician from Arkansas who was looking for a location, were prowling around the woods, a short distance southeast of Foyil on a balmy spring day. A squirrel ran up a tall sycamore tree, and Mr. Foyil fired three shots but failed to land his game. Mr. Kittrell then tried his luck with his old Tennessee rifle, but only cut the leaves near Mr. Squirrel, who was on a top-most limb which waved in the breeze. Then Dr. Tinsley, a boasted marksman, "cracked down" with his new Marlin--- three or four shots in succession---still no meat. Then the young Doctor from Arkansas suggested that he try his luck. They at once agreed. The young man stepped away to a hill-side, selected a rock, drew back, and "let 'er drive". What do you suppose happened? The squirrel fell prostrate to the root of the tree, to the consternation of the three men armed with expensive guns.
