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Chauncey O. Moore, Supervisor
Indian-Pioneer History, S-149

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February 25, 1937

Lawrence D. Hibbs
Field Worker

Interview: S. R. Lewis

OLD TIMES

Major Ridge, a full blood Cherokee Indian, who married a white woman and his son, John Ridge, who also married a white woman, came to what is now Delaware County, Indian Territory, from Georgia in the year of 1835. John Ridge, the son, had a college education and both men were considered rich men.

They opened a trading post near the Arkansas State line. (This store may have been called Ridge's Store.) They employed one, William Childers, as a clerk in this trading post. Later they gave William Childers \$8,000.00 to go to New Orleans to buy supplies for this store. He made the trip by way of the Arkansas and Mississippi Rivers, buying the supplies and returning to the trading post.

The Ridges, father and son, were signers of the Treaty of 1835, and which, later, was the cause of their deaths.

After the general removal of the Cherokees to Indian Territory in 1838, the two Ridges (Major and John) were assassinated by their own tribe, the reason being that because these two men signed the treaty disposing of the Cherokee country east of the Mississippi River for land in Indian Territory, the tribe thought they had been betrayed and sold out by their supposed friends. They were killed in different sections, but on the same day. Major Ridge was killed somewhere near the Arkansas state line, on the same day a relative of theirs was killed near Parkhill, which is about six miles south of Tahlequah.

The wives of the two Ridges, being white women, feared for their lives after the death of their husbands and they moved to Arkansas, remaining there until their deaths.

John Ridge had a son, John Rollins Ridge, who later came back to this country to see after his father's and grandfather's land and business. On reaching their old home, he found that there was a black stallion missing and he started out in search of this horse. After some time of searching he rode into the farm yard of a man by the name of Kell. He asked him if he had seen a black stallion and Kell told him he had and pointed to where the horse was standing. They had some words about the horse and the outcome was that Ridge killed Kell, after which he escaped into Missouri and later joined a party of Indians that was migrating to California. He later made a trip or two back to this country and to Washington, D. C. but ended his days in California. While in California, he became a newspaper man and a writer, later being known as the "Poet of the Sierras of California".

After the killing of the Ridges, William Childers came over Grand River into what is now Mayes County and tended some hogs and ran a ferry for a man whose name I was unable to get. While there, he married a Cherokee Indian woman and raised a large family, five boys and one girl. These children for some unknown reason, went into the Creek Nation before the Civil war and were admitted to citizenship in the Creek Nation under Article 2 of the Muskogee and Creek Constitution. The children were:

Robert Childers, who became the first Judge of the Coweta District just after the Civil War.

Daniel Childers

James Childers

Napoleon Childers, who became the next Judge of the Coweta District and was the last Judge to serve.

Josephine Childers

Louis Childers.

Most of these boys found in the Civil War under the command of Stand-
aite. From this family comes the Childers of today.

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February 17, 1937

Lawrence D. Hibbs
Field Worker

Interview: S. R. Lewis

GHOST TOWN, AND HISTORY OF PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH IT

About twenty-five miles east of Tulsa, on the west side of the Verdigris River, and on the north side of Adams Creek, is an old Ghost Town by the name of "Spring Creek". This town was established by the McIntosh Detachment of Creek Indians in 1882. This site covers about one square mile of ground which has a different look than the ground around it, due to the fact that it was tramped over by the dwellers and was cultivated for their subsistence. This town was still in existence until after the ratification of the Creek Agreement in 1901.

George W. Mowbray, An Englishman, came to Tulsa in 1888, as a missionary of the Creek Nation, and he went to Springtown and established a Methodist Church in about 1889 or 1890. This church was there for several years. He later came back to Tulsa and was twice elected Mayor of Tulsa, later going into the undertaking business, which he kept until his death just a few years ago. His eldest daughter married Heck Thomas (Capt. Heck Thomas, Deputy U. S. Marshal). His second daughter married T. J. Archer who was a merchant here in Tulsa. Archer Street was named after him. When he died he was buried in the cemetery at the corner of Second and Frisco Streets but later his body was moved to the Oaklawn Cemetery at Eleventh and Peoria Streets, as referred to before in a report by the writer.

At the site of this Ghost Town is an old graveyard and buried there are Walter Childers and Caesar Rogers, also Wesley Tiger who was former Judge of Coweta District.

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February 23, 1937

Lawrence D. Hibbs
Field Worker

Interview: S. R. Lewis

CATCHING A CATTLE THIEF

Tom Wilson and Lon Lewis, Deputy United States Marshals, with Zack Wilson, nephew of Tom Wilson, and S. R. Lewis, brother of Lon Lewis, deputized possemen, working under the United States Marshal at Muskogee, in 1895 went to Springtown, which is now a ghost town, but at that time was located about twenty-five miles east of Tulsa, to arrest two bad men, escaped convicts, their names being Texas Jack, a train robber who had broken jail at Muskogee, and another man whose name could not be remembered, who was a gambler and had broken jail at Sapulpa. Both men were white men. They also had a warrant for an Indian by the name of Gube Childers, for cattle stealing.

Arriving there in the evening, they found a big festival going on. They got off of their horses and tied them up and gave them something to eat and also got something for themselves. They commenced to look around for their men but were unable to locate them. Along about 9:00 o'clock that night, a colored man came to them and asked them if they were looking for Gube Childers. Tom Wilson said they were, so he told them that Childers would be there after a little while. It wasn't long until Gube Childers made his appearance at the dance, and Tom Wilson came over to where he was sitting and told him he had a warrant for his arrest for cattle stealing and placed him under arrest, also under guard for the night. Gube Childers claimed they couldn't arrest him as he was not guilty as he had already been tried by the Creek Courts and was acquitted. But they maintained their guard over him that night and the next morning they had breakfast and made ready to take their prisoner to Muskogee but he refused to go and would not get on his horse. During the argument that followed, they began to notice that around the edge of the crowd, men were standing with rifles and that they were covered. The deputies figured there were some fifty men thus stationed so they began to figure they were not going to get out of there alive. Some one said this man's uncle was in the crowd and that he was the Judge that had sat at the trial that had acquitted him. This man was N. B. Childers, Judge of the Coweta District. (He was 1/2 blood Creek). He was called in to the conference and asked if this man had been tried by him and acquitted and his answer was that he had sat as Judge in the case and found that the cattle had been stolen from a white man, the husband of a Creek woman, and that his court did not have jurisdiction over the case. Tom Wilson, Deputy, said in that case then he would take him to Muskogee. Judge Childers told his nephew that he would have to go as he was under the Jurisdiction of the Federal Court and for him to go on with the officers and that they would follow in a couple of days and make his bond. The officers took him to Muskogee and he was tried in the Federal Court and was convicted and sentenced to three years in the Federal Penitentiary.

The officers felt that for a little while that morning, their lives were not worth a thing but through the honesty of Judge N. B. Childers, the guilty man's uncle, they were able to make their arrest. The uncle could just as easily have said that he had tried the man and had found him "Not Guilty".

Wesley O. Moore, Supervisor
Pioneer History 8-149

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Wesley Hibbs
Worker

Interview: Mr. S. R. Lewis

In an interview between the writer and S. R. Lewis, 316 Alexander Building, Tulsa, Mr. Lewis informs me there is a grave yard located on the east side of Little Caney river, five miles northwest of Collinsville, near Musgrove Fort. This is an old Indian grave yard located on Patented land, and is now owned by some Loan or Mortgage company. There are about 25 graves in this cemetery.

Mrs. Musgrove (nee Rogers), the grandmother of the late Will Rogers, is buried there along with some other members of her family. There are tombstones at the most of the Rogers' graves, giving dates covering the ones buried there. Around these, is an old iron fence, but the other graves are not protected, and in due course of time, if these graves are not protected in some way, they will be lost to the public by being farmed over, and otherwise destroyed.

There is, also, buried in this cemetery, Frank Sanders, a prominent Cherokee Indian. Others: Bill and Ed Green, brothers, known as notorious outlaws. These men were killed by Lon Lewis, Bud Ledgeter, and Charles McClelland, U.S. Deputy Marshalls, on October 12, 1896.

Wesley O. Moore, Supervisor
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Ernest Hibbs
Field Worker

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An Interview With Mr. S. R. Lewis
316 Alexander Building, Tulsa, Okla.

Mr. Lewis, with his family, came to Oklahoma, or rather Indian Territory, from Hill county, Texas, in the year of 1887, and settled close to what is now the town of Dawson, which was named after his mother. Her maiden name was Dawson. They lived in this locality for a number of years.

The Nighthawks Keetoowahs Society Inc., of which Mr. S. R. Lewis is a member, has a membership of 7,000, and their meeting place is near Gore, Oklahoma.

The Illinois fire which the Nighthawk Keetoowahs Society is the keeper has been burning since 1838, and was brought to Gore, Oklahoma, from Alabama, in an earthen jar, and has been kept burning ever since. It is used in their ceremonials.

Dr. Paul Truett of Tulsa is the first white man to be taken into the Nighthawk Keetoowah Society. He was adopted by this Society last July 19, 1936, and the ceremonial was concluded at their last meeting September 19, 1936. A part of the ceremonial that Mr. Truett had to go through, was to march around this sacred fire (Illinois Fire) seven times, and then to shake hands with all the members attending at this time, there being about 1,000 present.

At the last meeting, September 19, 1936, the Nighthawk Keetoowah Society Incorporated Jesus Christ as their God, but still believing in the Great Spirit. This meeting of the Nighthawks Keetoowah's Society was held near Gore, Oklahoma, on the Red Bird Reservation.

Wm. O. Moore, Supervisor
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Frederic Hibbs
Lumber Worker

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Interviews with: S. R. Lewis
316 Alexander Building, Tulsa
P. A. Karr
115 S. Frisco, Tulsa

There is an Indian cemetery located at the corner of 2nd Street and Frisco Street, Tulsa. At the time it was first started, it was in the Creek Nation. The first person being buried there, was in 1882. Mr. S. R. Lewis' brother was buried there in 1890. Other prominent men buried here were: J. M. Crutchfield, William Moody, Frank Shennelt (these two men were Deputy US Marshalls), T. J. Archer and an outlaw by the name of Joseph Crowell who was killed by a Deputy Marshall by the name of Ledbetter, now of Muskogee. There are, of course, a number of Indians buried here.

Instead of preserving this cemetery, it was permitted to be filled in for building purposes.

The city of Tulsa opened second street and Frisco street in 1910, which cut almost through the center of this cemetery. A few of the bodies were moved (Mr. Crutchfield's body was moved and placed in Oaklawn cemetery at 11th & Peoria streets, Tulsa), but the most of them were left there, and in later years, in building the larger buildings that now stand on this site, dug into these graves and destroyed them. Some vandalism was carried on. In one instance, in building a filling station, the workers were digging a hole to bury the gasoline storage tank, and evidently opened up a grave of an Indian woman, as they found a lady's belt buckle. This buckle was made of silver, and had carvings of different kinds of animals on it. These workers kept the belt buckle. On another occasion, some workmen were working on a sewer in the basement of a house located near 116 S. Frisco, and they opened up a grave and found a large, silver finger ring. This evidently was the grave of an Indian man, but they did not disturb anything they saw, simply filling up the hole after completing their work.

Mr. P. A. Karr lives at 115 S. Frisco, which is in the north east part of this cemetery. At one time, there was a large oak tree standing in the north part of this cemetery, under which an Indian woman was supposed to be buried, and she was supposed to have had a large amount of gold ornaments buried with her. The stump of this tree is under this house above referred to.

Mr. Lewis says that his people, and others concerned, did everything they could to keep this grave yard from being filled on for building purposes, but were unable to stop it.