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The story of Crawford Goldsby, alias Cherokee Bill is an echo from out the past and his colorful career as an outlaw came to a very sad end.

Cherokee Bill was born at Angelo, Texas about the year 1874 and he was of mixed blood, Cherokee, Negro and white. His mother's name was Beck, a Cherokee freedman of Negro and Indian blood and was considered a very good woman, soft spoken and of a kindly disposition.

His father, it was said was a red headed soldier of German descent, who was stationed at Fort Gibson. He was either released from the army or transferred to Angelo, Texas where Mrs. Goldsby followed him and where her son Crawford was born.

Goldsby (Cherokee Bill) grew up like many other boys at that time, without much education; however, he was sent to school in Kansas for a while and then to a Catholic school in Pennsylvania, but it seems that he did not stay long at either place and that he preferred a life of crime to an education.

His mother and father separated while he was a small boy and his mother returned to Fort Gibson. He had one sister named Georgia, who married a man by the name of Brown, a brother to Clarence Brown, they were only half brother and sister but they all went by the same name.

When he was about sixteen years old he had some trouble with a Negro by the name of Jake Lewis. This trouble happened while at a dance one night near Fort Gibson. They quarrelled and finally had a fight and it is said that Lewis got the best of him, so sometime after the fight Cherokee Bill, after brooding over the former trouble took his gun and went to the home of Lewis and shot him twice inflicting some very painful wounds but Lewis finally recovered.

Up to this time Cherokee Bill had been considered a very good boy 381  
but perhaps he had inherited some of the fiery blood of his German father  
or perhaps from his Indian mother, which had caused him to quickly resent  
the affronts of others. Be this as it may, he then began his long career  
of crime. He left home and took refuge in the Creek and Seminole Nations,  
became acquainted with Bill and Jim Cook, who were later leaders of the  
famous "Cook Gang".

Early in the spring of 1894 that the U. S. Government sent the money  
to pay the Indians for the lease of land called the Cherokee Strip. The  
Cook Boys and Cherokee Bill all were Indians and were entitled to payment  
like others, except that they were supposed to be fugitives from justice  
and could not afford to go get the money, so they rode over to what was  
known as the half way house, fourteen miles from Tahlequah and half way  
between Tahlequah and Fort Gibson, which was occupied by Effie Crittenden.  
They arranged for her to go and get the money for them, so the last of the  
payment she brought the money to them. Here at Effie Crittenden's they  
thought they were safe from the officers and so they decided to stay there  
another day. Late in the afternoon they were all sitting around under the  
trees in the yard when a posse headed by a U. S. Marshal rode up and had  
a warrant for one of the Cook Boys. A gun battle ensued and one of the  
posse, Sequoyah Houston, was killed and the posse fled. Cherokee Bill and  
the Cook Boys left the country and were not seen in that part for sometime.

The next day after the killing of Houston, the officers were question-  
ing Effie Crittenden and when asked if Crawford Goldsby was in the crowd  
that was in the fight with the officers, she said, "No it was not Crawford  
Goldsby, but it was Cherokee Bill". From then on he was always known as  
Cherokee Bill. Those who knew him best say that he would take long journeys  
through the woods and that his mental alertness during his sleepless nights

while playing the game with his shrewd foes left him almost limp and silent, almost morose. He would talk in monosyllables and would get on the move again. When he rode into any town, he would plunge into wild lawless dissipation and spend very freely the "hot money" for drinking and gambling and in such company as he was in most of the time, fight were common. He never seemed to be afraid of anyone or anything. He was bold and fearless by nature, had small beady eyes, which showed humor and the smile on his face was a challenge. Sometime during the year of 1894, he killed Ernest Melton, while robbing the store at Lenapah. Prior to this time <sup>he</sup> had been doing some daring things and many crimes were laid at his door. He had killed a man by the name of Brown, a brother-in-law to Bequeyah Houston; a railroad man at Fort Gibson and a man by the name of Richardson at Nowata, Oklahoma. He robbed Scales store at Wetumpka, held up the train at Red Fork, Parkerson's store at Okmulgee, a train at Coweta, robbed the Express Office at Choteau and then robbed Schufelt's store at Lenapah. Lenapah is near Tulsa and between Tulsa and Coffeyville, Kansas, this place is where Henry Starr did his first hold-up and killed Floyd Wilson.

The day that Cherokee Bill robbed Schufelt's store, he and Jim French or "Verdigres Kid" rode into town from the south and stopped in front of the store. They were dressed about like all other cowboys, who came there to trade so no one suspicioned them. They dismounted, dashed into the store, Winchesters in their hands, and said "Everybody stick 'em up". Cherokee Bill told his partner to keep watch on the outside while he made Schufelt open the safe for him. The safe was opened and the money and as many other articles as they thought they needed were taken. As he backed out of the store his pal whispered something to him and he returned into the store and took some cartridges from the shelf and as he came out, this

time he looked across the street and saw Ernest Melton looking out the window to see what was going on and without any cause or reason, he raised his gun and shot Melton through the head. They left in haste, evading the officers for a time. However, before long Deputy U. S. Marshal Smith learned that Cherokee Bill was courting a girl by the name of Maggie Glass, half negro and half Cherokee, who was living with a relative by the name of Ike Rogers, about five miles east of Nowata. Smith asked Rogers to invite him to his house on a certain night so that he could surprise him and capture him. Rogers had been taking money and groceries from Cherokee Bill and of course he thought Rogers his friend so he accepted the invitation and was trapped, but when he came riding up to the house where Maggie was to be, he became suspicious and as usual was on the alert. Smith depended on Rogers to make the capture so Rogers slept with him that night, thinking he would have an easy time taking him while he was asleep--but no such luck. During the night, Rogers seemed to attempt to capture him but Cherokee Bill grabbed his gun but Rogers made some satisfactory excuse for being up and went back to bed and failed to get his man that night.

Sometime the following day, while sitting around the fire and while Cherokee Bill was off his guard for a moment, Rogers struck him on the head with the poker but did not kill him. A scuffle followed and finally Rogers with the help of a man named Scales, managed to put the handcuffs on him, while he was begging them to either turn him loose or shoot him right there. He offered them money and horses to set him free but he had no success. They put him into a wagon and started to Fort Smith. On the way he broke the handcuffs and would have gained his freedom but they kept him covered with guns all the time. They stopped on the way at a shop and had shackles put on his legs and finally arrived at Fort Smith

with their prisoner.

Cherokee Bill's trial came up sometime in February 1895. He had a good lawyer by the name of Reed. They produced evidence to prove that he was at Fort Gibson on the day of the murder but the jury found him guilty and the judge set the date of execution for June 25, 1895. His lawyer appealed the case to the Supreme Court and as the case was in the hands of the Supreme Court, he was granted a stay of execution and it was this stay that cost the life of Larry Keaton. For while they were waiting on the decision of the Supreme Court, a gun was smuggled into the cell of Cherokee Bill and in an attempt to break jail he shot and killed Keaton. However, he was captured and tried for this murder and sentenced to hang.

March 17, 1896 was set for his execution and at 2 P.M. he walked to the gallows. He was cool and displayed good nerve. There were one hundred tickets given out to those who wished to witness the execution but people climbed over the jail yard fence until the yard was full of people. When Cherokee Bill saw so many people he said, "Hell, look at the people, something must be going to happen". Then he looked up at the sky and said, "Well, this is as good a day to die as any day". His mother was at his side and urged him to not weaken. When stepped upon the gallows he was asked if there was anything he wished to say. He said, "I came here to die, not to make a speech". At 2:30 P. M. the lever was pulled and Cherokee Bill went into eternity.

The death of Cherokee Bill broke another chain that bound Oklahoma with its more modern times, when the sixshooter was law and the men who practiced law that way were literally blazing the trail through to civilization.

(This story was furnished by Mrs. E. H. Whitmire, of Addiclee, Okla.).

WHITMIRE, E. H. (MRS.)

INTERVIEW.

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G. F.  
E. F. Dodson  
April 16, 1937

INTERVIEW WITH MRS. E. H. WHITMIRE  
BY E. F. DODSON.

E. H. Whitmore, a Cherokee Indian, was born on the old Whitmire plantation in the Cherokee Nation, now Adair County, Oklahoma, June 13, 1858. Here he grew to manhood, helping his father on the farm, hunting some and fishing with the boys who lived near him and at that time neighbors who were considered close would not be considered close now, for at that time three or four miles away was close.

This plantation was one of the largest to be found anywhere near it. It comprised some four hundred acres. Much of the work was done by negro slaves. Mr. Whitmire grew large crops of corn, oats and vegetables.

Stock raising was also carried on to some extent, for home use and the surplus was sold for money to buy things not raised on the farm.

Early in Mr. Whitmire's life much of the cloth used by the family was spun and woven into cloth by the woman, also made into garments at home. Later they bought the cloth, such as jeans, to be made into nice coats and pants. Linsey cloth was a favorite cloth for women's clothes.



Both women and men wore moccasins made of deerskin and hog skin, these were made at home or by some neighbor who could such work.

Most of the home furnishings were made at home by hand, and much of the cooking was done over the open fire in the fireplace or if the weather was hot, the cooking was then done over the fire out in the yard. The cooking utensils consisted of, usually, iron pot or kettles, a Dutch oven for cooking bread, skillets and buckets.

The social side of life was of course not what it is today but people enjoyed themselves equally as well, for there was game of several kinds, such as the deer, wild turkeys, wild hogs, squirrels, raccons and many other small animals and birds that are not here any more; and it was often that the men and boys would get together and have a big hunt, get some good meat for food and have a good time sociably too. Then, too, the men and boys fished much more than they do now, for fish was plentiful in all the streams here.

Church going was another feature enjoyed by all, especially the old Camp Meetings, at Peavine, which have been described in some former papers of ours. Visiting the neighbors was one of the social features.

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The home of Mr. Whitmire was a center of social affairs. There the young and old alike would come to visit the family. The old folks would spend much of their time chatting about old times back East, before they came here and this was very interesting to the youngsters. Sometimes the older people popped corn, made molasses candy or cracked nuts to please the children. Sometimes the children played some games that they liked. All in all they had a good time.

The home was a seven room structure, two large hewed pine log rooms with a half story above and wide hallway between. On the front side there was a wide porch the entire length of the building. On the west side there were side rooms or the lean-to rooms. The house was built with the idea of making it strong against an attack, for in the early days that was one of the features of most houses. The window bases were high, walls strong and the doors on the outside were strong.

There was a large open fireplace at the end of each main room and the kitchen, the one in the kitchen was used to furnish heat for the room and also in early times it was used to cook. This house was built by George Whitmire about 1840 and is still in a very good state of preservation.

Mr. E. H. Whitmire attended school in the common schools near his home. The first one he attended was taught by Mrs. Nan Duncan, nee Starr, in one of the negro huts on his father's farm.

At the age of nineteen he entered the Cherokee National Male Seminary and graduated four years later, taught school in the nearby schools for several terms. At the age of twenty-four he married Miss Mary Wright and about this time he was given a place on the Board of Education of the Cherokee Nation. It was the Board's duty to establish schools and appoint the teachers. He served on the Board four years. He served as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation two terms.

His first wife died and later he married Miss Anne Lorene Bouquet and they are the parents of two boys.

In 1898 he again entered the teaching profession and taught three years, then moved to Westville, Oklahoma; worked in a store and as assistant Post Master of Westville and after two years he resigned and was appointed city marshal, serving twelve years. Then he served two years as mayor. He then opened a business of his own, a meat market and grocery and operated this for four years and then moved to Addielee, Oklahoma, where he operated a general store and postoffice until his death, December 10, 1936.