

GRAY, JAMES RUSSELL

CEMETERIES--CHOCTAW #12370

PITTSBURGH COUNTY

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BURIAL GROUND FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

CRAY, JAMES RUSSELL. CEMETERIES--CHOCTAW 12370
PITTSBURG COUNTY

Field worker's name Gray, James Russell

This report made on (date) December 9 1937

1. Name (if any) of burial ground _____
2. Founded (date) _____ By _____
3. Abandoned (date) _____ why abandoned Indians moved away
4. Present owners of premises Thomas Raburn estate

Address of present owners Hartshorne, Oklahoma, Route 1

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

5. Original owners of premises. Mrs. Ludlow
6. Give names of other persons who at one time owned the premises.
7. Approximate number of graves. 36
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. See history attached
12. Condition of the premises mostly cultivated field
13. Detailed location of burial ground.

14. Legal location of burial ground, County Pittsburg

Section 30 Township 5N Range 17E

Legal description of 80 acres on which graveyard is situated: E/2 SW of 30-5-17 (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 _____

		X	Approximate location of graveyard.

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Subject: Old Choctaw Burial Ground.

I have lived near Hartshorne for twenty-one years, and had heard many stories about this graveyard. In a small way it is part of the history of the community. Many of the older people in this vicinity speak of it when telling of the early days; there are two or three legends connected with it.

Mr. Will Guthrie of Hartshorne speaks of it sometimes; he has farmed land right next to it. Mr. John Ford, Hartshorne, Route 1, has farmed the land where the graveyard is. So has his son, Lige.

George W. Smith, whose address is Hartshorne, Route 1, said, "This graveyard has been abandoned for years. In this neighborhood it is called the Graveyard Field."

The land on which the graveyard is situated is owned by the estate of Mr. Thomas Raburn, deceased. His widow, Mrs. Thomas Raburn, lives on the place. Mrs. Raburn does not know when the old graveyard was first established and does not know how to find out. The Raburn family has lived on and near this place since 1900 and the graveyard was abandoned when they came.

An Indian woman had this land leased, or owned it. Her name was Ludlow and she was a sister of Doctor Bend who

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used to be in Hartshorne before statehood. They were Choctaws with some white blood.

Mr. Raburn farmed this land for years, leasing it from Mrs. Ludlow. Then in 1912 when the segregated coal lands were put up for sale he bought it, paying \$9.00 per acre.

There is not much there now; no headstones, no houses, no pens. A man named Will Steele, who was farming the land in 1904 or 1905, burned the grass and weeds off and all the log pens were burned.

The graves had been surrounded by pens and some of them had little houses over the graves. The graves scattered out over nearly an acre of ground. There were at least three dozen graves there in 1900.

After Mr. Steele had plowed over some of the graveyard Mr. Raburn just went on cultivating the ground, though he would never have done so if someone else had not done it first.

Mr. Raburn has plowed up bones two or three times; he uncovered the skeleton of a baby. People farming this land often turn up bones and skulls even now.

We used to find arrowheads and spearheads there by the peck, but they are not so thick now. Arrowheads are still

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found all over this six hundred and forty acre section; people living on the farm just north of us are always finding them.

Everyone around here used to say the old graveyard was haunted and tell about someone seeing lights and big white objects there. You hear such talk about almost all old graveyards, though.

There is a story about gold being buried there, too. The story may not be true, but it is pretty widely known.

There was no direct confirmation of this story until an old Indian named Adams told in 1914 that he, the Indian, had seen the gold. It seems that Adams stayed all night with another Choctaw who lived just north of the cemetery. Adams saw this other Indian take a pitcher of gold and go off to bury it somewhere near the graveyard.

There are holes in the pasture south of the graveyard where people have dug for this gold. Mr. Raburn has caught many a man in there with mineral rods.