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In Search of Daha's Grave

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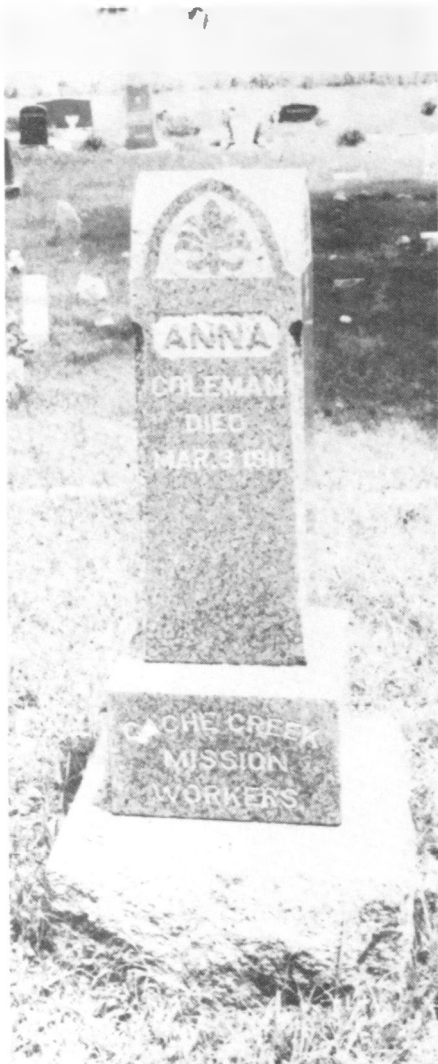
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*Anna Coleman's grave.
Could Doha's be right behind it?*

IN SEARCH OF DAHA'S GRAVE

By Dale Hill

"Daha Creek," I said, looking at the trees that curled through the pastures to our left.

"Yep," my guide told me. "Named after ol' Chief Daha, a

Kiowa-Apache. The government built three homes back then for three chiefs—Stumblingbear, Whiteman, and Daha. Hoped it would settle them down. Daha's was over there on the knoll in front of those trees."

I strained to look as the car slowed. The house had long been razed.

"Daha didn't live in it, though. Never would. It had two bedrooms, but Chief Daha lived in a tent down by the creek."

"You think we can find his grave?" I asked.

"Well..." the old man said as he speeded up. I had made arrangements with him to go over to see an Indian cemetery not far from where I was staying.

We turned the corner at Boone, just west of Apache and drove south. "How did Boone get its name?"

"Albert Boone. Named after Albert Boone, grandson of Daniel Boone, the Indian agent at Anadarko for the Kiowa-Apache tribe. He was still there in 1907 when Oklahoma became a state," my friend said and then brightened. "Boone was where I went to school for many years."

I saw a graveyard ahead and figured it was the cemetery we wanted.

"No, that's not it," I heard him telling me. That's the white Cache Creek Cemetery. The Indian one is farther on down."

We drove another mile and turned back about a half mile. There it was to our left. We saw a cement archway that had on it the notation COMANCHE INDIAN CEMETERY—1934. Beyond the sign was a well-kept cemetery, decorated with flowers by recent Memorial Day visitors. Actually, the cemetery is located in a field with a pasture to the left and wheat fields to the right

with a row of Chinese elms as the boundaries.

"All these Indian graves?"

"All but one. One white crippled lady who worked for the mission was buried out here—Anna Coleman."

"Which gravestone's Daha's?" I asked as we parked on a small road adjacent to some gravestones.

"Follow me," my guide ordered and then began to lead me over to some graves.

"There's no one that knows anymore about these graves than I do," he said. "Shoot, I went to school for years with a bunch of these Indians back in the late teens and early twenties, I guess."

He began to give me a tour of the cemetery. I was amazed at how many names I recognized from school—Poafpybitty, Oyebi, Chalepah, Archilta, Hugar, Cisco, Wetselline, Kills-first, Redbird. Some of the graves had large headstones with both their White name and their Indian name. I couldn't begin to pronounce the Indian names.

"Most of the Indians with the big stones had oil," he said as he pointed out some of the larger tombstones.

I saw many infant graves, and some of them were marked only with wooden crosses. I couldn't help but think of my own daughter's grave in Northern Oklahoma. Graves represent not only the completion of life but also lives that were never completed. I became very depressed.

"Look over here," he yelled. "Here's where the Parkers are buried, Surely you've heard of Quanah Parker. This is his family."

I stared at the names Lynn, Thomas, Jerome. Some of the graves were homemade. Others

were obviously commercial. I remembered a Boy Scout camper from Lawton whose name was Quanah Parker.

"Tom and Lynn were his sons," he continued. My thoughts were interrupted.

One of the graves had the heading CYNTHIA ANN PARKER—INFANT OF. . . Again I felt the pain. Then I spotted a large, flat stone that had the inscription

**KNOX TAKAWANA
1888-1941
THE LAST OF THE
HORSEBACK
BOW AND ARROW
BUFFALO KILLERS**

"I saw him perform one time. He tried to kill a buffalo with just a bow and arrow," my guide told me. He then pointed out other graves such as Yellowfish and his son Wiley Yellow-

fish. He told how they raised longhorns and sold them to the Whites who would, in turn, sell them to the government to give back to the Indians.

"There she is!" he shouted.

He was pointing at a large tombstone taller than all the others, with Anna Coleman's inscription.

My thoughts raced as I jotted down some notes. If I were to take a test over all these names, who they were or what they did, I wouldn't do well. I remembered a young Indian student who was making A's in Oklahoma History.

"You didn't do as well in your other history classes," I mentioned. "What's going on?"

"Mr. Hill, this is different. This is about my people." Was I beginning to understand?

"But where is Daha's grave?" I finally asked after a half hour of fruitless searching.

"Well, I can't say for sure,"

my guide said. "You see, they were buried by us white folks back then, and sometimes they didn't bother to mark the graves. He was probably the first one ever buried in this cemetery, but I can give you a good guess."

He walked over to the Chinese elm tree that straddled the middle of the cemetery and then walked a few steps north. There he stopped at some graves marked with just stones.

"If I were a bettin' man, I'd bet it would be one of these," he said as he pointed to a cluster of graves marked by a single stone. There was no writing on the stone.

I stared. How much Indian history have we lost? How many unmarked graves and unmarked cemeteries hide a fortune in Indian lore right here in Western Oklahoma?

DALE HILL, a SOSU graduate now teaching in the Anadarko Public Schools, makes his first appearance in WESTVIEW with this story.



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