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The Forgotten Ones

Wenona L. Dunn

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In innumerable, tiny, overgrown, and forgotten cemeteries, there lie the last remains of people whose names are known only to God. Two such cemeteries can be found near the small town of Foss in the far northwest corner of Washita County.

The first is situated beside a dirt road a mile or two west of town. In this small plot of ground can be seen evidences of several graves—clumps of iris (planted by loving hands so long ago), pieces of old metal markers, a pile of rocks, a broken tombstone with the name missing. And in some places, there are only mounds or depressions which indicate that someone was buried there.

Also in this cemetery are four marked graves: Mary wife of W.S. McDaniel, who died in 1901 in her twenty-third year; Little Pride Fowler, who died in 1902 at the age of two years eight months; and William and Martha Musgrove, whose last resting places are marked by a nice, large granite marker. He died in 1913 and she in 1931; they were possibly the last people to be buried there.

Why this cemetery was abandoned and why these few were buried there rather than in the Foss City Cemetery isn't known. Quite possibly some of those who were buried in this old cemetery perished in the disastrous flood of 1902, which washed away the first town of Foss. That town was built in the valley of Turkey Creek—a little south of the present town. It was re-built on higher ground.

The second of these forgotten cemeteries can be found by following the winding country road heading southeast of Foss and up through the red shale hills. It was, quite possibly, a family cemetery. The only graves with markers are those of Mary and Abraham Karns and William Harol Karns. Abraham died in 1903 at the age of 82, Mary in 1907 at the age of 75, and Harol wasn't quite 10 when he died in 1910. On his tombstone is this inscription:

*Sleep on, sweet Harol,
and take your rest.
God has called you;
He thought it was best.*

Near these graves there is a fenced enclosure, indicating that someone was surely buried there, but no marker remains. It is quite evident that several other people lie in unmarked graves in this small, weed-grown cemetery.

More questions arise than can be answered when one strolls through a long-forgotten cemetery. Who were these people? What was their life story? Why do they lie forgotten? No one may ever know! ●

(WENONA L. DUNN of Burns Flat is a retired post-office relief clerk who enjoys fishing, hiking, writing, and traveling. She and her husband, Walter, have four sons and nine grandchildren. Wenona's most ambitious writing project presently is the completion of the biographical/historical/fictional stories of the women in her and Walter's families.)

THE FORGOTTEN ONES

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