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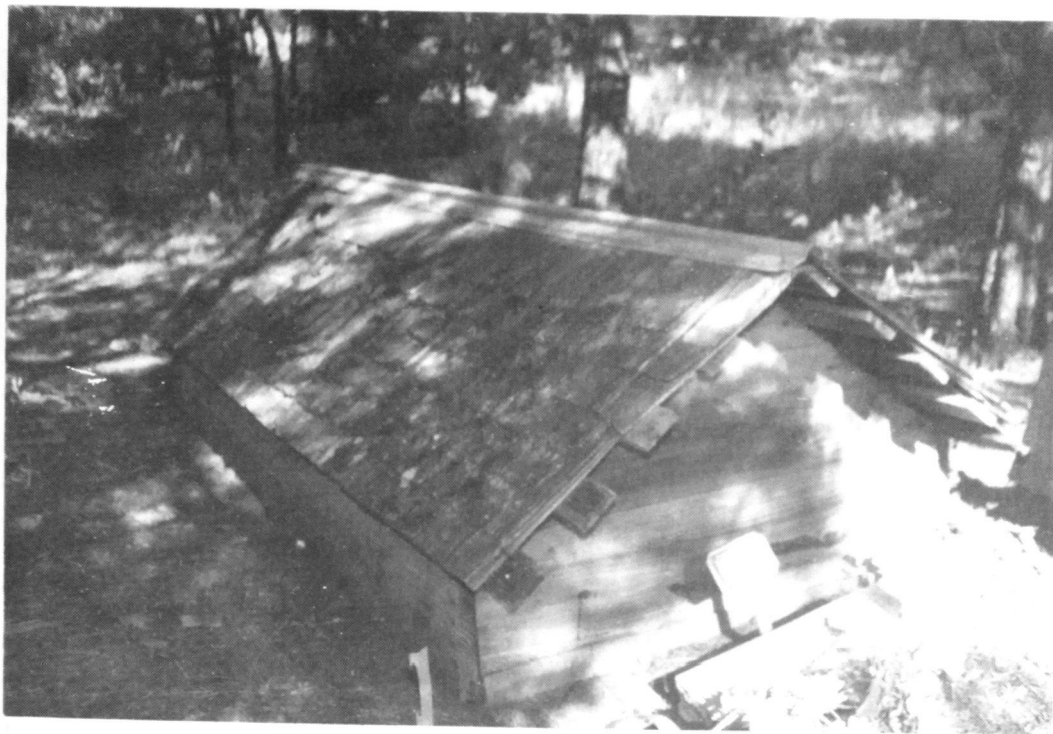
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JOHNSON INDIAN CEMETERY

By Imogene Barger



One of the best-kept Indian cemeteries in this area is the Johnson Indian Cemetery located $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles east of Lookeba in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2-10-11. It is on the farm of the late Joe Johnson, grandson of the last hereditary chief of the Caddo tribe, Amos Longhat. Joe Johnson was reared by Charley Adams, who was appointed chief after Longhat. The Caddo Indians then approved a tribal constitution, and the chiefs became elective.

Those buried in the cemetery are: Joseph Johnson (Caddo: 1916-1984); Charles Adams (Caddo: 1944, age 64); Martha Johnson Adams (Charley's wife, Caddo, 1951, age 81); Hubert Franklin Cook (Part Pima, 1932-1972); Sarah Longhat Johnson (Caddo, 1896-1943); Francis Johnson (Caddo, 1886-1944); Annie Johnson Cook (Hubert's mother, Caddo, 1944, age 55); Vincent Johnson (Joe's uncle, Caddo, 1947, age 52); Robert Adams (Charley's son, Caddo, 1918, age 14); Mary Bentley Johnson (1933, age 37); Sadie Dunlap (Francis Johnson's first wife, 1913, age

26); Henry Johnson (7-month-old son of Francis Johnson, 1913); Babies (two daughters of Ester Coffee, Delawares, about 1905 — not twins but exact ages unknown); Jumper Williams (grandfather of Buntin Williams, long-time Binger sheriff, Caddo, 1848-1908).

The Johnson Indian Cemetery is a mixture of the old and the new. There are tumbled-down remains of the old grave houses once used as markers. There is a board-and-shingle house still in very good condition. In contrast, there are granite stones added as permanent markers by Joe and his wife, Bertha, before Joe's death in 1984. There's even a cement vault. The Johnsons have planted iris all through and along the banks of the creek behind the cemetery. They have even planted them throughout the timber on the surrounding hills. There are cedars, redbuds, maples, and various kinds of oak trees to provide shade and a peaceful site for the graves. The cemetery is on the site of an old Indian campground where any tribe was welcome to camp

and where the Caddo tribe camped and sometimes held its religious ceremonies. If visitors to the cemetery drop down over the hill into the timbered valley at dusky dark and walk through the burial site and across the nearby creek, their imaginations seem to soar. They can see the flickering campfires of old reflected on the bronze-skinned Indians with their braided hair and eyes that seem to hold the wisdom of the ages in their dark depths. If visitors listen hard enough, the beat of the tomtoms and the chants of the singers can be heard in the still night air. They can see the dancers in full regalia as they whirl and leap around the fire. They can see the sweat lodge that was used for purification rights and the old gray-haired men as they spoke of past glories.

The valley is a fitting place to bury the Indian dead. They are nestled in the arms of long-ago and not-so-long-ago ancestors. Memories and a heritage live on. ●