

The more I thought about this the more angry it made me, so I took this letter to the editor

Then he came out with this article - still some remarks I don't like and which are not true - Our grand-father did not take the land from the Indians

This came out in a Van Buren paper

Two Sundays ago, we were invited by Ben Lincoln to teach the Sunday school lesson for the Men's Bible class at the First Presbyterian church in Fort Smith. Afterwards we decided to drive out on the southside and see the old buckeye tree and ran onto something we never knew was there—a little family cemetery, about 30 feet square, lined with rock walls, neatly kept.

In the plot were headstones that told of family tragedy a century ago—of a family named Stromberg—who must have been members of the German race that settled extensively along the Indian frontier. Frank Willingham, who formerly lived at Shipley, took us through the old log house over an old time cellar carved in the rocks of the brow of a hill looking down into the valley where

the Indian Territory line ran north and south a couple of hundred yards to the west. E. J. Mckel lives nearby, and the two men showed me the cemetery. The oldest stone was a marker for Margaret Stromberg, born May 2, 1864, died Oct. 7, 1865. Another one was for Henry William, son of H. W. and F. C. Stromberg, died Oct. 2, 1872, age six years. And a third one was for Francis Charlotte Stromberg, born August 4, 1834 and died Sept. 7, 1870. No doubt she was the mother of the two little ones. The father was Henry William Stromberg, born Feb. 1, 1819, and died Jan. 9, 1903.

The tenants on the place said they do not believe any of the family survives. The present owner is Mrs. W. E. Pollard who lives on Spadling avenue, and she respects the sacred spot where the family is buried.

But what about them? While a great war was going on, what were these "foreigners" doing? And the tragedy that tore up their family? That intimate, personal, touch—which makes you understand and so really know those people of yesterday—that is the kind of history we like.

Letters To Editor

The article about the Stromberg family which appeared several weeks ago in this paper was not the true story of this family.

In 1849 my grandfather, Henry William Stromberg came to this country from Bielefeld, West Falsen in Germany—near the Dutch border and bought the farm 3 miles south of town as soon as possible he obtained his citizenship papers. As there was no Lutheran church here at this time he went to the First Presbyterian congregation for many years.

There was no tragedy in the family—two children died young—and the mother died at the early age of 35. No note was taken of the older persons who are buried in the family plot, my uncle and two aunts.

My grandfather was a florist and nursery man and his farm was a show place for years. He also had green houses with many beautiful flowers and shrubs. After being in Holland and Germany and seeing their wonderful flowers, I can understand my grandfather's love of many plants and flowers.

For years there was a Linden-wood tree in the front yard—he brought this when came home from a trip to Germany.

During the Civil War my grandfather stayed at the farm and helped the neighbor families whose men had gone to war. He had been crippled by an accident and could not serve.

I do recall two other German families nearby—the Schleuters were just south of the old home place and the Wilburgs were on the Texas road (Towson avenue). All were prosperous farmers and American citizens.

Would like to mention that for many years there was a windmill at the old home place—the only one I've ever seen except in Holland.

LEILA MORGAN SMITH

There's nothing like "fame" to start history to boiling; but this Editor has a peculiar quirk about so called history. We are interested very little in "big shots" of history. Rather we are attracted to the common folks, who if they had not been there, no history would have been made.

We have a letter on this page, from a lady who came to our office rather excitedly, and apparently disturbed, by a reference we made to a most interesting situation we found a few weeks back . . . namely the Stromberg place, on the south of Fort Smith. She is a granddaughter and being intimately related to the founder, she had in her lifetime had heard the stories of how an immigrant family from Germany had settled down on a hillside overlooking the Indian Territory a few miles away from a protective frontier fort. There on a spot where they could see the "savages" on the west—we quote that word "savage" because that was what the white folks called the Indians, who in most instances were superior in intellect and behaviour than those foreigners who took their land and put them on federal dole with bad

whiskey and venereal disease to bring them down into desolation—a black mark against civilization which may yet rise up to damn our people.

Anyway—we had a feeling when we reported the story that we might step on somebody's toes—there is nothing like a marker in cemetery to agitate descendants who far too often forget their heritage. Out of that churning of the milk of memory there often comes a story of pioneer bravery—that has gone neglected too long in our part of the country.

That's why we work in history; and our only regret is that we are not doing as much of it as we should. In fact George Baker, down at Howe, Okla. may get out his shooting-iron, if he is at the decoration Sunday, and take a pot shot for not writing the story he gave me—two years ago.