



A Detailed History of
Tiger Bone Cemetery
Creek County, Oklahoma

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This entire 5 page article (including this cover page) may be accessed, downloaded and printed as a PDF file entitled:

“Tiger Bone Cemetery, Historic Hallowed Ground-Creek County, Oklahoma”

on the website **www.fireytrails.com**. (Click on the “*Rock Creek Community-Highlights of History*” Button on the left side of the page.) Look for the link above. To access the history page directly, go to <http://www.fireytrails.com/History.htm>. **Tiger Bone Cemetery** also has its own page on our www.fireytrails.com website with PDF links with detailed history of those buried there.

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TIGER BONE CEMETERY

“Tiger Bone Cemetery - Historic Hallowed Ground”

"William Bruner, old-time Town King, rests in the Tiger Bone Cemetery near other members of his family including Annie Bruner, his mother; his daughters, Esther Bruner Reno and Stella M. Goodwin; his sons, Lewis and Emanuel Bruner; his sister, Jemima Rodgers and her daughter, Lucy Rodgers; Flora Bruner and several other unmarked graves. He asked to be buried there among his people and near the Old Coyote Trail where he had hunted when a youth, twenty miles southwest of Tulsa." As printed in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* - Winter 1952-53

Tiger Bone Cemetery is just 1/10 of a mile down the road east from our Firey Trails turn-in on our neighbors property. It was established long before statehood in



1887 when Tiger Bone, a *Euclidean (Yuchi) Creek scout, was the first to be buried there. William G. "Billie" Bruner, (left) his mother, Annie, and many other members of Billie Bruner's family chose this tiny cemetery as their final resting place. Billie Bruner is by



far the most storied inhabitant on the cemetery. In his lifetime he had personal connections with Creek Leader Opothleyahola (who fought against the Confederates in the first Civil War in Oklahoma at Round Mountain.) Billie Bruner also had personal connections with Grat Dalton of the infamous Dalton Gang, the hanging Judge Isaac Parker in Fort Smith and William McKinley, the 25th President of the United States. Joseph William Firey wrote in his daily journal about attending Billie Bruner's funeral after he died on Easter Sunday, 1952.

Tiger Bone Cemetery was desecrated in the 50's by artifact hunters and has fallen prey to vandalism and neglect since. Since sometime in the mid to late 80's, most of the hundred year old headstones had been either broken, turned over or stolen. Tiger Bone and Billie Bruner, especially, had prominent large headstones which are now nowhere to be seen. Only a few small headstones can be seen scattered here and there among the weeds.

It's such a shame, but now it's very hard to distinguish the memorial grounds (fenced with barbed wire) from the pasture land that surrounds it on three sides. The tiny cemetery seems to be destined to fade into an anonymous oblivion...A sad commentary for such a historic, hallowed piece of ground. (Written by Diana Firey in 2005. See the developments since on the next page.)





Forgotten faded flowers at Tiger Bone Cemetery



Current Update (May 5, 2009) - On January 23, 2009, we received an email from Jay Isley who lives in the Oklahoma City area. Jay is the great, great grandson of Billie Bruner. He knew that his great, great grandfather was buried at Tiger Bone Cemetery but had no idea of the location of the cemetery. While researching the phrase "Tiger Bone Cemetery" on the internet, he came across our website and replica Tiger Bone Cemetery (because Tiger Bone Cemetery is always featured with our hayride visitors and is prominent on our website). He said his heart skipped a beat when he realized that we knew exactly where the cemetery was located (since we had the phrase that the actual cemetery was 1/10th of a mile from our replica at Firey Trails.) Since then, Jay and his wife, Niki, have visited us and have been able to visit the cemetery for the first time. Jay is currently in correspondence with the Creek Nation regarding the eventual restoration of this abandoned cemetery. *After all these years, looks like Tiger Bone Cemetery might not stay forgotten after all !*



Jay and his sister, Jennie, visiting Tiger Bone Cemetery on 4-26-09

The modern address of Tiger Bone Cemetery would be: **19200 W. 61st Street S.**
on the old Rock Creek Road
(1/10th of a mile from where 61st dead ends going east and starts to wind.)

Tiger Bone Cemetery has its own page on our website www.fireytrails.com. On this page are PDF links that give much more information on Billie Bruner, Tiger Bone and others buried at the cemetery. Also there are links to other famous people connected to those buried at Tiger Bone.

***Stay Turned ! Looks like the Tiger Bone Cemetery story may not have a sad ending after all !
We will keep you updated.***