

MAJOR GEORGE LOWREY

(Talk delivered by T.L. Ballenger at the Lowrey family reunion at
Tahlequah June 14, 1964)

It is a distinct pleasure to me today to speak briefly concerning the character and outstanding achievements of the Lowrey family, more particularly those of Major George Lowrey. I have not had the privilage of knowing all of the Lowreys by any means but, from my study of history and from my personal interviews and conferences with different members of the family, I am acquainted with a considerable number of them. In my work on the genealogy of the Lowrey family I have had numerous interviews with Jim Lowrey and Mrs. Lowrey and have always found them courteous and obliging. The same is true of many others who have been of material help to me. A family genealogy is never the work of a single individual, many people must be involved in it.

In addition to the Lowreys proper some fifteen or twenty outstanding families are interwoven with them, such as, the Hoyts, the Keys, the Halls, the Walkers, the Gladds, the Balentines, and McEachins, the Smiths, the Gaines, the Benges, the Morgans, the Rosses, the Wards, the Milams, the Scales, and several others.

The Lowrey family played a prominent part in the early history of the Cherokees, even before their removal to this country, and they have continued on through the nineteenth century and up to the present time. They have been prominent in governmental affairs, in the various wars, as missionaries, as teachers, in fact in practically every walk of life. The family was rather well to do when they lived in eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama before their removal to the West. They occupied good farms and held negro slaves.

Major George Lowrey, the second child of the Scotch trader George Lowrey and a full blood Cherokee woman named Nannie of the Oo-loo-tsa family, was born at Tohskeege on the Tennessee river near Tellico Block house in 1770. The family was of the Holly clan. His Indian name was Agin-agi-li, meaning "Rising Fawn". He became one of the most distinguished citizens of the Cherokee Nation.

Little is known of his formal education. He may not have attended any school but we do know that he sent his children first to a private school and later to Brainerd Mission. This mission was established in 1817 by the American Board of Foreign Missions and was located on the west side of Chickamauga Creek in Tennessee two miles from the Georgia Line. George Lowrey was a well educated man regardless of where or how he got it.

He was skilled in the use of the Cherokee language and was in great demand as an interpreter. He would stand by the minister and repeat his sermon in concise Cherokee, sentence by sentence. If the minister said something he did not understand, he would say: