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THE OLD CHOCTAW INDIAN CAPITOL AT TUSKAHOMA, OKLA.

By Muriel H. Wright

A recent convention of Choctaws at the Tuskahoma council house, the first meeting held there in many years, took steps to preserve the last capitol of their former nation as one of Oklahoma's historic places. It is two miles north of the present town of Tuskahoma, in Pushmataha county.

In 1883, the Choctaw general council (legislature) made an appropriation of \$25,000 for the erection of a new council house at the recently designated capital that had been named "Tuskahoma" (red warrior). The bill stipulated that the new building should be located "about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of old Nanih Waya." The latter had been the first capital of the Choctaws after their immigration to the Indian territory, in 1831-34. Its location was about a mile and a half northwest of the present town of Tuskahoma. The name Nanih Waya" was an old one among

the Choctaws. According to one of their ancient legends, the tribe was first created and organized in the midst of a beautiful mountain in the far west, called Nanih Waya (fruitful mountain).

Another legend says they migrated from that region centuries ago and finally settled east of the Mississippi river, where a large mound was erected over the bones of those who had died on the long journey. This mound was called Nanih Waya in memory of the legendary mountain in the far west and was held in great reverence. It is a historic fact that there was a sacred mound known by this name in the Choctaw country in Mississippi.

When the Choctaws moved to the Indian territory, they called their new capital Nanih Waya, symbolizing the relationship between their new government and their history and lore of the past. During different periods between 1850 and 1883, Doaksville, Boggy Depot, and Chahta Tamaha (Armstrong academy in Bryan county) each in turn was the capital of the nation. Finally, however, the central location of the old capital, and the sentiment attached to the name "Nanih Waya" influenced the selection of a new capital in its immediate vicinity.

The first meeting of the general council held in the new brick capitol at Tuskahoma in 1884 was a

great occasion among the Choctaws. From that time until 1907, what transpired in the council meetings at Tuskahoma is not only a part of Choctaw history, but also has an important place in the history of Oklahoma.