

Informant: Earl Boyd Pierce, Cherokee
Muskogee, Oklahoma

Interviewed by: Crosslin Smith, May 1967

Transcribed by: Linda Butler

SELF INTRODUCTION

Ladies and Gentlemen and all these youngsters. I'm so pleased to see you gathered here this afternoon. It is an honor and a privilege for me to stand on this sacred ground and bring to you very briefly some of the sentiments and goodwill of the principal chief of the Cherokees the Honorable W. W. Keeler of Bartlesville, Oklahoma. As William Lee has told you, I've been your lawyer since 1948 and for the Keetowaha, before that, back as far as 1938. I was born in Ft. Gibson and have lived in Muskogee County all my life. I practiced law at Muskogee and for a while for the government of the United States in Washington, since 1928. But since 1948, that's nearly 20 years, I've devoted all of my time to the legal affairs of the Cherokee people yourselves, included.

EXPLANATION PERTAINING TO CASE IN WHICH CHEROKEES WON A JUDGMENT OF \$14,789,000.

About a month ago, Chief Keeler, our chief, had me to go to Washington to assist our attorneys there in the prosecution of another of our great cases against the people and the government of the United States. It was a suit which can be very simply stated but if we win it, it will be much larger than the (?) case which we won in 1961. There if you will remember, the Federal Court in Washington gave to the Cherokees a judgment against the people and the Government of the United States for a sum of \$14,789,000, the judgment reading that the Cherokees have lost 6 million acres of their land in northwestern Oklahoma under circumstances amounting to duress and against their will. The taking of the land occurred long before many of us were born. In 1891 in Tahlequah, our leaders then, William P. Ross, Dennis W. Bushyhead, Cornelius Beaudinot and Rev. Walter Adair Duncan who was our principal leaders, were beaten to their knees when they objected over a period of two long years to the taking of that most valuable tracts of land. And the government took it anyway, and paid the Cherokees in 1894