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BUCKNER, SUMMA

INTERVIEW

#12789

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Billie Byrd
Investigator
1-24-38.

HO-TUL-VEE E-MAH-LA

Interview with Summa Buckner
Age 48

Okchia town (talwa) Hanna, Okla.

I am the great grand-nephew of the early leader and spokesman of what was the early Okchia tribe. He was called and known as Ho-tul-kee E-math-la. He was the man that led the Okchia tribe to what was the new country to be their home. I have seen him, been with him and have actually heard him tell of many things he had seen and of the many things he had done.

He told of the days back in the old homes and how during some uprising, a band of Indians had been scattered and had separated from the rest of their tribesmen and had been forced to flee and seek refuge from their enemies in the bamboo swamps of Tennessee. These Indians called a council meeting to decide what steps to take in organizing into a tribe for it was certain they would never reunite with the rest of their tribesmen. They had no idea of just where to start searching for the lost tribesmen but they only knew they would never see them.

The then chosen leader, Hotulkee Emathla, had his mind on a certain name, that of Ko-ha-al-kee

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(Bamboo people). He suggested this name at the council meeting, setting forth that they were trying to organize in the bamboos and they should choose that name as it seemed appropriate. Everyone seemed in favor of the name but it was from certain actions of one man who was very jolly-natured that it was decided that the tribe be called "Ea-te Hok-cha" and was so until it is known now as Okchai.

Hotalkee Emathla was always a strong believer and user in the powers of the tribal medicine. He always had some of the prepared medicine in his home. Usually it was Mek-ko Ho-ne-cha (wild King, a certain kind of herb) and prepared in a cedar bucket of water and further empowered for its remedial purposes with the incantations of the tribal medicine man, but he usually did all the work for himself. I can remember that he always placed the cedar bucket and its contents behind an open door while right above the cedar bucket and in the wall was stuck an owl feather. One time the feather had become loose from the wall and had fallen into the bucket of herbol medicine.

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We heard a sizzling sound as of something frying come from the direction of the bucket and when we investigated, we found the feather floating in the heroyal medicine and making the sounds that we had heard. My grandfather began to talk and seemed to ^{talk} to the feather just as if it was human, "So you've fallen into the medicine?" With those words, he promptly took the feather from the medicine and placed it back on the wall in its proper place.

Many of his words seemed to prophesy and although I was small then I later realized some of the things that he had spoken were coming true. He had the habit of taking and meddling with a peace pipe that he owned whenever he began to talk to anything.

He said, "In days to come you will see the making of things running across the country having the appearance of ribs." This he referred to, the railroads. "Other things will be placed in the air and be like the spider's web." This was the telegraph and telephone wires:-

One late evening just as the sun was setting in the west, he asked me if I could see the red streak and path made by the sun in its course during the day.

He moved his hand from the east to the west in an arched fashion yet I had to answer him that I could not see what he was able to see.

Tul-ma-see A-shule, another old Indian, was a very close friend of my great grand-father. They would visit with one another and they spent their time in talking of the things they both liked or knew about and joked with one another. There was a well-trodden path that led from the home of one to the other. Tul-ma-see, for a prank to show off his uncanny ability to Hotulkee Emathla, took a feather and stuck it in the trunk of the dead elm tree which stood near the path they used in their travels to one another's home. Emathla saw this, as it had been intended he should, and he very promptly answered the challenge by pushing the feather further into the dead elm until a few inches of it was visible. They were trying to show off their ability to do something with their knowledge.

"Ta-hee-no-kas-ohce"--- was a phrase always spoken as the opening words of a tribal council talk by the spokesmen and leaders of any tribal meeting. No one now seems to know what those words mean but it had

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been handed down and spoken as the elders had always used them in their councils. There are now only a few older men who use the words---they are the ones who still follow the old custom of laying speeches in the old way.