

MARTIN, TOM.

INTERVIEW

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Billie Byrd,
Journalist.
April 15, 1938.

Interview with Tom Martin.
Okemah, Oklahoma.
White & $\frac{1}{4}$ Cherokee.

The town of Checotah in McIntosh County was named after an old Creek Indian Chief, Sam Checote. He was elected to serve as Chief of the Muskogee-Creek Indians during the territorial days. He had come from back in the old country.

After the Indians had all been brought to the Indian country and settling was the main thing in those days, he took large tracts of land in the vicinity of what is now Checotah and held those lands for his stock for grazing. In the time of the Civil War, he served with the Union Army and as leader of the Creek Indian troops.

He was well-known for his knowledge and his good judgment in dealing with the whites that were coming into the country and looking for places to settle and to farm. It was to Checote that the Indians looked as he would take interest in their dealings with the whites about leasing the lands and what was to be done about the hay or the crops

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that would be raised and the other things that entered in-
to the leasing.

The whites and Indians visited with him to gain much
needed other information of the new country.

Judge Blanch, a white man, was the first man to erect
a store in the vicinity of the land comprising many acres
that was held by Sam Checote . This first store was just
the beginning of the present town of Checotah.

The honor of the name of Eufaula, McIntosh County, falls
upon the tribal town of Eufaula. Eufaula did not originate
in the Indian Territory as it was a name used back in the
old country and the tribal town wished it to be used in their
midst so that when the settlements and towns were being
established they chose the name.

Most of the business stores were operated and owned by
people of the Grayson clan or people. Those business houses
were located just across the present railroad on the eastern
side from the Katy depot.

Something queer that existed among these Gra, sons was
known. They had their own laws and their own method of

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carrying them out. They took revenge just as an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth. They sometimes fell under the feud class and for whatever harm or wrong was heaped upon them, they took revenge in an identical way. If a man or son of the Graysons was killed or harmed in one way, they would take revenge by killing or harming a man or son of the other side.

Old Chief Checote was an A-pai-ti, a band of the Creek Indians and they became a part of the Cussetah tribal town at a later time.