

INDEX CARDS

Intermarried Whites--Cherokee Nation
Political Parties--Cherokee
Elections--Cherokee
Rushyhead, Dennis W.
Mayes, Joel B.
Federal Relations--Cherokee
Civil War
Watie, Stand

3288

77

Conner, Francis M, Interview.

Grant Foreman, Director,
Hibbs, Field Worker,

Indian Pioneer History S-I49

April 15, 1937.

An interview between Francis M. Conner and Lawrence D. Hibbs, field worker on early Indian Territory History.

I married Rebecca Duncan in 1873 and we lived at Fairland near Miami, Okla., until my wife died in 1911. We reared our family while living here. My wife was 1/8 blood Cherokee and upon marrying her I was adopted by the Cherokee Tribe and was placed on an equal basis with the Cherokees themselves and received an equal share of any funds or any privileges that they enjoyed. There was a law enacted in 1875 which abolished this act and after that time a white man ~~marrying~~ ^{marrying} into the Cherokee Tribe did not participate in funds or allotments. After my first wife died I re-married and then moved to Missouri and lived there two years. After that I moved back to this section of Indian Territory and have lived here ever since.

I was elected to the Cherokee Council in 1887 and served in this capacity for two years. While a member of the Cherokee Council there were two political parties; one known as the National, which were the Northerners, and the Downing, which was known as the Southern.

Dennis Bushyhead was the Chief of the Cherokee Tribe at

2

that time and they held an election to elect a new Chief. The Council was setting at Tahlequah, which was the seat of Government, and the National party wouldn't consent to count the votes. As Dennis Bushyhead was a hold-over, the Downing party with their new Chief moved into the office with their new Chief, who was Joe Maze, and took over the reins of the Government, so the National party sent a representative to Ft. Gibson to wire the Federal Government in Washington of the state of affairs. A man was sent here from Washington to settle the dispute and on his arrival he called a joint session and the votes were counted and Joe B. Maze was elected and was sworn in as the new Chief of the Cherokee Tribe. Before the Government man was able to get a meeting of the joint session he had to threaten to call in the Government troops, which were stationed at Ft. Gibson, and take over the management of the Government, but it was all settled and both parties remained friends. After Mr. Conner served his term on the Cherokee Council, which was between 1887 and 1889, he was then elected to the Board of Town Commissioners and served in this capacity for three years.

I would like to relate a little incident that happened back in the early days among the Cherokee Indians. There were some

3

Cherokees who would war against their own people and in some cases kill their own tribesmen. This incident was a case of a man by the name of Sam Weir (he was a white man and married a 1/8 blood Cherokee woman) who lived on Cowskin Prairie near Southwest City Missouri. - In about 1862 a band of his own tribe (Cherokee) rode up to his front fence and this fence had a stile built across it as many fences did in that time. They called to him to come out and there happened to be another white man there at the time and they both walked out and walked to this stile and crossed over it and was standing on the steps on the out side of the fence and there was some little argument ensued and the Indians shot both of the men as they stood there unarmed. Of course they fell to the ground outside of the yard. After the Indians shot them they rode away leaving the bodies just as they had fallen. Mr. Weir's widow was so frightened that she gathered up her children and came over to our house, which was not far distant, and spent the night. The next morning my Sister and I hitched up our team of oxen to the wagon and took her back home. When we reached her house we found that the hogs had just about eaten the bodies of the two men. I set about digging a hole and after it was finished placed the two bodies in it and buried them there. Another incident I recall was

4

during the Civil war near Ft. Gibson. The Northern Army had about onehundred negroes out harvesting some hay and General Stan Watie learned of this so he crossed the Grand river near Muskogee with a Company of Creek Indians, a Company of Choctaws, and a Company of Cherokees and surrounded the Negroes and killed them all.