

MAXWELL, CHARLES (MRS.)

NORWOOD PAPERS. 7877

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Mason, Etta D. - Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History- S-149
October 19, 1937.

Letter
October 12, 1921.
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A letter written by J. S. Murrow to Mrs. Norwood and
Mrs. Elrod, both of Atoka. The letter is dated Oct. 12,
1921.

Dear Sisters:

I was born, raised and educated in Georgia. In 1857 I received an appointment from the Reheboth Association in Georgia and from the Domestic and Indian Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as a missionary to the Indians west of Arkansas in Indian Territory, and came to my field of labor that year. I have been here ever since.

I was in Indian Territory all the years of the Civil War. In violation of their treaties with the Indians to protect them, the United States Government deserted the Indian at the opening of the Civil War and withdrew all their soldiers from the forts in the Indian Territory, and they became refugees in the Choctaw and Chickasaw Country, on Red River and into Texas. They fled hurriedly from their homes and left all their property to the prey of the Jay Hawks. These

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Jay Hawkers burned the Indians' homes and farms and drove immense herds of cattle and ponies North into Kansas and Northern Missouri.

In retaliation raiding parties were organized in Texas who called themselves Texas Bushwhackers. These too raided in the now uninhabited portion of Indian Territory and drove great herds of the Indians' stock into Texas.

Then at the close of the War when the Indians returned to their homes they found them destroyed, their stock all stolen and their Country devastated and about as much of a wilderness as when they were brought into it from their homes east of the Mississippi River by force by the United States Government thirty years before.

In 1862 I was appointed by the Confederate Government as subsistence Agent for the refugees, Indian women, children, old men of the Seminoles and Creek and a few wild Indians.

In the discharge of these duties I had to contract in Texas for corn, flour, beef, salt and when obtainable, some other foods. Also I had to supervise the distribution of the Indians' food in a number of camps. These duties required that I should visit the camps not only of the refugees, but often of the Indian soldier in Confederate camps.

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In the winter of 1862 I visited the Camp of General Steele who was camped on Middle Boggy in the Choctaw Nation about a mile southeast of the place where the town of Atoka is now, near a large spring. With him were white soldiers from Texas, Col. Simmons' regiment and others.

General Stand Watie, the Cherokee, was camped near a large spring on the old site of the old Choctaw Court Ground about a mile east of Atoka; with him were the Cherokee and Choctaw regiments.

Colonel Norman McIntosh was camped on the North Boggy stream about three or four miles northeast of Atoka, and with him were the Creek regiments and Seminole battalions. These soldiers remained in their camps most of the winter. Measles broke out among them and there were quite a number of deaths. Some of them were buried in the old Harkins graveyard on the main road about a mile north of Atoka on the west side of the M.K. and T. tracks. Rough stones were placed at the head of these graves and the letters C.S.A. and the date of death marked thereon. Some of the soldiers were buried elsewhere, or about where Atoka is now.

The Councils of the Indian tribes then made treaties with the Confederate Government for protection.

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In 1862 at the request of the Seminole Council I was appointed the Agent of the Confederate Government for that tribe. In 1862 General Blount of the United States Army in Kansas, organized a command, which was known as the Kansas Jayhawkers. These soldiers were employed chiefly in raiding in the Indian Territory. A large number of the Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles seceded and emigrated into Kansas. During the thirty years these Indians had been given their Territory as their permanent home by the United States and they had acquired large herds of cattle, ponies and some other stock. They had comfortable homes, farms, churches and schools, and they were prosperous and happy.

General Blount's raiding Jayhawkers drove the Southern Indians, women and children from their homes. No Federal soldier came further south than Perryville. There was a little skirmish there. Both parties were surprised and both got away as rapidly as possible. These facts I know from personal knowledge.

Sincerely

J. S. Murrow.