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Frank H. Greer, Editor

EDITORIAL AND STATEMENT OF ALEX POSEY

A pathetic figure of the days that are gone forever, a type of the old-time Creek Indian as he existed in the years when he was free to roam at will through Indian Territory, is Chitto Harjo, "Crazy Snake," rather than the figure that has been conjured up by the lurid accounts of the recent "war," which have led many people to picture him as a second Geronimo or Satana, decked in war paint and feathers.

Harjo's only offense is that he has insisted on the carrying out of the treaties of the early days as he understood them -- treaties that guaranteed the Indians possession of the land "as long as grass grows and water flows." He insists that the possession should still be of the same sort that it was then, when all of the land was held in common, each member of the tribe using as much or as

little as he wished of the tribal domain, with none to let or hinder.

He had made many appeals to the federal officers, both in Washington and at Muskogee, and, while they recognize the futility of the fight which he is making, many of them are proud of his friendship. He has always felt that his people have not been treated fairly by the white man's government and felt that he had an additional grievance in the recent removal of restrictions which made the lands taxable.

#### INDIANS' SIDE OF THE CASE

Probably the best statement ever made of the Indian side of the tragedy of a dying race, now being enacted in Oklahoma, was made by the late Alex. Posey, the famous Creek Indian bard. He said:

"When the commission of the five civilized tribes opened the Creek land office at Muskogee in April, 1899, there was a rush to file by those citizens of the nation possessing the least Indian blood. These people secured the cream of the Indian lands. Later the full-bloods began slowly to file upon their allotments, but in almost every

case they found second or third grade land. The best lands lying along the streams and adjacent to the thriving towns had all been taken up.

"It is only a question of a very short time until these people will be evicted from their homes and compelled to make new ones on their allotments, to which they are strangers. This will work a great hardship upon these people. There are several hundred families of them thus situated, and they are the real Indians which the United States has made so much talk and bother about protecting.

"These people are totally unfitted to face the conditions which now surround them in Oklahoma. Some of their friends among the more intelligent and well-informed Indians think that their affairs should be taken in hand by a commission under the auspices of the United States government."

The snakes have been naturally suspicious of the officers of the law, which was in considerable measure responsible for the recent trouble, and have complained that white men claiming to be officers have come among them, arrested members of their clan and then told them that in order to secure

their release they must sign certain papers which proved to be deeds to their allotments.

#### CAUSE OF TROUBLE LAST YEAR

Following the removal of restrictions last year, Harjo called a meeting at the Hickory Ground to discuss the situation. The deliberations were secret and the armed light horse guard kept out, by force, if necessary, all prying strangers. This action led to excited rumors that an armed force of Indians and negroes was gathered at the Hickory Ground, preparatory to making an attack on the towns and villages in the vicinity.

A request was made for the national guard, but Adjutant General Frank Canton, who had been all through the Indian country as cowman and Deputy Marshal twenty years ago, and knew the habits and temper of the Indians, decided that he could do more good by a personal visit than by going at the head of the troops. He proceeded to the Hickory Ground alone and unarmed and secured a personal interview with Chitto Harjo, telling him that his armed guard must be disbanded, as under the state laws no one had a right to carry arms except officers.

Harjo insisted that under the treaties he had a right to maintain his guard, but stated that he would forego this right except for the danger of attack from some of the white men, who were greatly excited and wanted to take vengeance on him. After the adjutant general had promised him protection all arms were laid down and his forces disbanded. That finished the Snake "uprising," so called, of last year.

#### THE "UPRISING" THIS SPRING

The one which has just closed is scarcely more serious except that the militia were actually called into the field this time and the Indians took to the woods. General Canton opposed calling out the troops this time, and would rather have handled the situation himself, believing that he could again have prevented trouble by a personal visit to the Snake clan. A warrant was then issued for Harjo on the charge of inciting resistance to the officers. Harjo and his immediate friends resisted arrest and two officers were killed, although there is no evidence that the old chief himself fired the shot.

White lawyers, making their headquarters much of the time at Washington are considered to be largely responsible for the continuance of the Snakes' resistance toward the government. These lawyers would tell the unsophisticated full-bloods that they stood close to the federal government and that for a certain consideration they would see that the old tribal relations were restored and have a bill passed through congress ordering the whites to leave the Snake country, so that the Indians might hunt and fish undisturbed. A collection would be taken up among the Snakes assembled at Hickory Ground to furnish the money which they demanded.