

Pushmataha (Apushim-alhtaha, 'the sapling is ready, or finished, for him.'--Halbert.) A noted Choctaw, of unknown ancestry, born on the N. bank of Noxuba creek in Noxubee co., Miss., in 1764; died at Washington, D. C., Dec. 24, 1824. Before he was 20 years of age he distinguished himself in an expedition against the Osage, W. of the Mississippi. The boy disappeared early in a conflict that lasted all day, and on rejoining the Choctaw warriors was jeered at and accused of cowardice, whereon Pushmataha replied, "Let those laugh who can show more scalps than I can," forthwith producing five scalps, which he threw upon the ground--the result of a single-handed onslaught on the enemy's rear. This incident gained for him the name "Eagle" and won for him a chieftaincy; later he became mingo of the Oklahannali or Six Towns district of the Choctaw, and exercised much influence in promoting friendly relations with the whites. Although generally victorious, Pushmataha's war party on one occasion going alone at night to a Tonaqua (Tawakoni?) village, killing seven men with his own hand, and setting fire to several houses. During the next two years he made three more expeditions against the same people, adding eight scalps to his trophies. When Tecumseh visited the Choctaw in 1811 to persuade them to join in an uprising against the Americans, Pushmataha strongly opposed the movement, and it was largely through his influence that the Shawnee chief's mission among this tribe failed. During the war of 1812 most of the Choctaw became friendly to the United States through the opposition of Pushmataha and John Pitchlynn to a neutral course, Pushmataha being alleged to have said, on the last day of a ten days' council: "The Creeks were once our friends. They have joined the English and we must now follow different trails. When our fathers took the hand of Washington, they told him the Choctaw would always be friends of his nation, and Pushmataha can not be false to their promises. I am now ready to fight against both the English and the Creeks. He was at the head of 500 warriors during the war, engaging in 24 fights and serving under Jackson's eye in the Pensacola campaign. In 1813, with about 150 Choctaw warriors he joined Gen. Claiborne and distinguished himself in the attack and defeat of the Creeks under Weatherford at Katchati, or Holy Ground, on Alabama, Ala. While aiding the United States troops he was so rigid in his discipline that he soon succeeded in converting his wild warriors into efficient soldiers, while for his energy in fighting the Creeks and Seminoles he became popularly known to the whites as "The Indian General." Pushmataha signed the treaties of Nov. 16, 1805; Oct. 24, 1816; and Oct. 18, 1820. In negotiating the last treaty, at Doak's Stand, "he displayed much diplomacy and showed a business capacity equal to that of Gen. Jackson, against whom he was pitted, in driving a sharp bargain." In 1824 he went to Washington to negotiate another treaty in behalf of his tribe. Following a brief visit to Lafayette, then at the capital, Pushmataha became ill and died within 4 hours. In accordance with his request he was buried with military honors, a procession of 2,000 persons, military and civilian, accompanied by President Jackson, following his remains to Congressional Cemetery. A shaft bearing the following inscriptions was erected over his grave: "Pushmataha a Choctaw chief lies here. This monument to his memory is erected by his brother chiefs who were associated with him in a delegation from their nation, in the year 1824, to the General Government of the United States." "Pushmataha was a warrior of great distinction--He was wise in council--eloquent in an extraordinary degree, and on all occasions, and under all circumstances, the white man's friend." He died in Washington, on the 24th of December, 1824, of the croup, in the 60th year of his age. General Jackson frequently expressed the opinion that Pushmataha was the greatest and the bravest Indian he had ever known, and John Randolph of Roanoke, in pronouncing a eulogy on him in the Senate, uttered the words regarding his wisdom, his eloquence, and his friendship for the whites that afterward