

Story from the Topeka Star by Cecil Howes. (circa, late 1940s.)

HOME BUILT BY AN INDIAN CHIEF PROVIDES LINK TO HISTORIC PAST IN SHAWNEE AREA.

Report that Charles Bluejacket's house, nearly a century old, is to be torn down, Brings an effort by his grandson to have it made a museum - Its builder was a Minister and Fruit grower as well as head of the Shawnee Tribe.

W. C. Bluejacket and his wife are seeking the aid of the Kansas Historical Society or some other organization, in the preservation of the home of his grandfather near Shawnee, Kas.

This home, nearly one hundred years old, built of oak and walnut logs and later covered with weatherboarding, stands on a knoll about a mile north of Shawnee, on the land owned by Mrs. Anna M. Loercher of Shawnee. The house was built about 1851 by the Rev. Charles Bluejacket, one-time chief of the Shawnee tribe, long an interpreter at Shawnee Mission and then a citizen of Kansas on the farm of 200 acres near Shawnee. He left Kansas in 1871 to join the remnants of his tribe in Indian Territory. The Missouri, Kansas & Texas railroad named a station for him, after Chief Bluejacket moved to the territory, and he died there October 29, 1897.

Chief Bluejacket returned to Wyandotte and Johnson counties in September, 1897, to try to find for the Wyandotte Historical Society the grave of the Shawnee Prophet, a brother of the famous Tecumseh. Bluejacket had attended the funeral of the Prophet, when he was about 20 years old. After a long search over the neighborhood south of Argentine, Bluejacket said the "trees had grown too big" and the whole terrain had changed, so that he could not find the grave or the burial ground.

Old Home Area Changed.

He spent several days visiting old friends and trying to find familiar spots in the area where he had lived so long. The changes wrought by time and the movement of the white people into Kansas made the district strange to him. He contracted a severe cold in his search and died shortly after his return to his home.

W. C. Bluejacket is a grandson of the old chief and Indian preacher, whose home is one of the oldest habitable homes still standing in Kansas. The grandson heard that the old house was likely to be torn down this winter to make way for a more modern structure for the farm tenants, so he traveled from his home in California to see what could be done about it. He had a long conference with Kirke Mecnem, secretary of the Kansas Historical society here, and other officials regarding the project.

The society has no funds except those specifically appropriated by the Legislature, and no provision was made last winter for the preservation of any old houses, regardless of their historic value. However, Mr. Mecnem plans to see if it is possible to interest any of the historically minded societies in Wyandotte and Johnson counties in the effort to preserve the old house.

Chief Bluejacket was born in Michigan in 1816 or 1817 - both dates are given in biographies. His family moved to Ohio in 1822 and he was educated at Quaker and Baptist mission schools. After he came to Kansas, he went to school at Shawnee Manual Labor school and became a Methodist preacher.

Old timers in Wyandotte and Johnson counties said the Rev. Charles Bluejacket used excellent English, and was a forceful speaker with a powerful voice. Many white people regularly attended the services which the Indian conducted in schoolhouses, churches and homes of the neighborhood.