



An Ancient Myth of the
origin of the various clans as
recognized among the Creek
Indians, as told to Rev. William
McCombs during his early manhood,
and by
McCombs to the writer Dec. 23^d 1910.

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When the Creek Indians came to know anything of themselves, it was to find that they had been for a long series of generations completely buried and covered as it were in a dense fog impenetrable to their powers of vision. Being unable to see, they were dependent on their other senses, ^{especially that of touch and hearing} in their efforts to obtain subsistence for their support.

In their quest for subsistence the people very naturally became separated, straying away from each other in groups, and each group was aware of the existence and locality of its neighbors only by calling to them through the obscuring fog, each adopting the precaution not to stray out of calling distance of some other of the scattered groups.

After a great while there arose a wind from the east that gradually drove the fog from the land. The group of people who first saw clearly the land ~~that~~ and the various objects of nature now rendered visible by the dissipating fog, were given the name of the Wind clan. It is related that among the many things they were now able to see, the first animate objects seen by the people of the Wind clan were a skunk and a hare which appear to have accompanied them during their existence in the obscuring fog. While the people did not adopt either of these as their



patronymic, they did declare them their nearest and dearest friends. So well is this understood by the full blood Creek Indian, that it is universally understood to be the duty of the sons of Wind clansmen always to extend to these animals protection and defence from physical injury or ridicule; saying "they are of my fathers"

As the fog continued to recede and disappear before the driving east wind, other groups of people came to light; and as they would look about them, they adopted as the patronymic of the clan by which they would thereafter be known, the first live animal they saw which had emerged from the fog with them.

In this manner three other clans, — the Beaver, the Bear and the Bird were established, who together with the Wind have always been known as Hut. hak. ul. Kee (the Whites) and recognized as leaders in the establishment and maintenance of peace in the nation. The Wolf clan is kindred to the Bear clan, but without the political prestige of the latter. All the other clans which are very numerous were formed in the same manner, and are known as Tsi. Look. hot. ul. kee — (speakers of a different language) as distinguished from the Hut. hak. ul. kee, or Whites. — This matter of clan relationship in the early days was by far more sacred, and its requirements more rigidly observed than the claims of consanguinity, and such an event as the marriage of persons each belonging to the same clan was



impossible and not to be thought of. In rare instances of sexual intercourse between persons of the same clan, the culprits were apprehended and brought before the next meeting of the people at the public square, and there in the presence of all the members of the town given the penalty of Sap-kä-tsup-kü - the Long Scratch.

This penalty was inflicted by causing the guilty couple to stand perfectly nude in the presence of all the people there gathered together, when a functionary detailed for that purpose approached them and with a sharp pointed instrument not unlike a small awl, pierced the skin on the back of the neck, making this Scratch, or incision in the cuticle continuous along the course of the spinal column down to the heel. This is duly inflicted ^{on} both the man and the woman, and great as the physical pain must be, it is hardly so great as the humiliation, the disgrace and ignominy of ever afterward being branded and remarked by ones acquaintances as "He who once suffered the penalty of Sap-kä-tsup-kü" - the Long Scratch.