

INDEX CARDS

Cameteries--Cherokee  
Clans--Cherokee  
Farming--Cherokee Nation  
Lynch family  
Courts--Cherokee  
Watie, Stané  
Martin, John  
Schools--Cherokee Nation  
Factions--Cherokee  
Attorneys--Cherokee Nation  
Constitutional Convention--Indian members

Interview with Joseph Martin Lynch

By H.F. Dodson

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Joseph Martin Lynch, a Cherokee, was born July 30, 1881, in Flint District, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, near the present town of Bunch, Adair County, Okla.

His father, Cicero L. Lynch, a Cherokee, was born May 9, 1841, near the present town of Strong, Delaware County, Okla. Died Sept. 6th, 1920. Buried at New Hope Cemetery, Stilwell, Okla.

His mother, Nannie E. (Bell) Lynch, a Cherokee woman, was born near the present town of Bunch, Okla. Flint District Cherokee Nation, June 17, 1841, died July 9, 1905. Buried in old family cemetery near Bunch, Okla.

The father of Joseph Martin Lynch was of the Sheshone Clan, the mother of the Wolf Clan.

The ancestors of Mr. Lynch came from Virginia ; the ancestors of his mother came from Georgia.

Cicero L. Lynch was a farmer and politician. He farmed quite extensively, growing crops of corn, wheat, oats and vegetables ; also raised stock, cattle, hogs and horses. Later however, he gave most of his time to politics, serving terms as sheriff of Flint District and as District Judge of the Court.

2

Both grandfathers of Joseph Martin Lynch, John A. Bell and Joseph Martin Lynch, were members of the Ridge or Treaty Party. Cicero L. Lynch was a brother-in-law to Stan Watie. Cicero L. Lynch was the last Chief-Justice of the Supreme Court, of the Cherokee Nation.

John Martin, a great-grandfather of Joseph Martin Lynch, was the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the Cherokee Nation, and is buried in the Street at Ft. Gibson.

Joseph Martin Lynch attended the common schools at Flint Dist. Cherokee Nation at Greasy Valley and Round Springs Schools. His first teacher was Mrs. Lydia Choate, the wife of Baxter Choate. Later he attended the Cherokee National Male Seminary of Tahlequah. Later he attended the Valparaiso College at Valparaiso, Ind; the Law Department of the Cumberland University at Lebanon, Tennessee. After graduation he returned to his home in Stilwell, Adair County, Okla., where he entered the law profession and has enjoyed a good practice ever since. He has been prominent in politics. The first office he held was City Recorder of Stilwell ; Clerk of the Constitutional Convention, First Register of Deeds, Adair County, elected in 1907- U. S. Commissioner, appointed by Judge R. L. Williams, County Judge of Adair County 1930-1938. He was married to Miss Hazel Mason at Miami, Okla, 1913. They are Methodist. Mr. Lynch says he saw his grandmother dye clothes with walnut bark

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Mr. Lynch tells how murder trials were conducted in the Cherokee Courts. If there was a mis-trial, as was sometimes the case, there would be another jury ordered for the following day, and on in the same way until there was a verdict. Sometimes there were four or five juries called before the case was finally decided.

If the accused was convicted of murder, he was given one week only to be ready for execution. He was shackled with shackles fastened to the legs with heavy rivets, then when the day of execution came he was taken to some place and the rivets filed in two, and he was immediately hanged .