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Billie Byrd,
Journalist
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Interview with Bunny Hicks,
Okemah, Oklahoma.

The tribal council, with conference place at Okmulgee, was the ruling and law making body of the Muskogee-Creek tribe before the white men brought their laws to the Indian country.

I was eighteen years old when I was chosen to serve in the House of Warriors and I rightly remember that two of us were elected to represent our town of Okfuskee at the meetings when it was in session.

The chief of the Muskogee-Creek tribe, with the other elected members and the members of the two houses known as the House of Warriors and the House of Kings, was the moving factor and the law making bodies for the tribe. They served for a term of four years and their service continued if the behavior and reputation remained good. If unfavorable reports of the conduct of any member of the Houses were heard, that person's reported deeds were investigated but only upon the two-thirds votes of the members of both Houses was a person discharged from serving in either of the two Houses.

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The sessions of the council were usually held twice a year or probably once a year. Those meetings would continue in session for a week or more time according to the amount of work on hand. Each member of the House of Warriors or the House of Kings was allowed 10¢ for every mile traveled to be present at the sessions. A meeting would not be carried on unless two-thirds of the members of the Houses responded to the roll call. In case there were not enough members present, the assembled members waited until enough members were rounded up to make up the two-thirds required for a meeting to be conducted.

The criminals and law breakers brought before any of the judges were rightly tried and sentenced, but the tribal chief was free to pass sentence as he was understood to know the tribal laws and knew what best to do in all kinds of cases. His actions were taken as final and he could free a person or carry out the penalty of the Indian tribal laws.

The House of Warriors could make and pass a resolution in their midst while the House of Kings could either refuse or pass it in their House. The House of Kings, at all times, if a resolution passed on by the House of War-

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riors within five days or the resolution was taken to be accepted no matter how hard the House of Kings argued and tried to reject it after the five days which was allowed.

As the new laws were made in the tribal council, there was one certain man whose duties were to have the laws written properly and printed in the English and Muskogee-Creek language. At the completion of the printing these new printed laws were sent to the judges of each of the six districts in the Muskogee-Creek tribe with the judges then distributing some of the laws to any of the Indians within their districts and to those who desired them.

Death was usually the penalty for any murderer but the law tried to be lenient with those who killed in self-defense. A person hiring someone else and forcing them to kill a person was classed as guilty as a murderer with death as the penalty for his crime. It was not against the law for a person to kill, injure or maim another in aiding a third party about to be killed.

It was not as though the tribal courts and laws were

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extreme in their idea of keeping order within the tribe but any person left unpunished would try to take advantage in believing that he was not punished for any of the crimes and was free to attempt to do more crimes. These tribal courts were maintained for the benefit of the Indians as well as for the whole Indian country.