

ROSS, S. n.

BAD OMEN.

12734

343

ROSS, S. W.

A BAD OMEN

12734

Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
January 19, 1938.

A Bad Omen.

In Civil War times the Union Indian Brigade was in command of Colonel William A. Philips, a native of Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland, where he was born in 1814. William A. Philips was brought to the United States as a youth. He lived awhile in Ohio, but removed to Kansas Territory and was there during the exciting period preceding the outbreak of the Civil War. In 1857 he became the founder of the present city of Salina, Kansas. Upon formation of the Union Indian Brigade he became its commander, performing the duties of a Brigadier General, though holding the rank of colonel until the close of the conflict. After the return of peace and during a number of years afterward, Colonel Philips served the Cherokees in the capacity of attorney at Washington, D. C.

In connection with the service of Colonel Philips in the Civil War period, many anecdotes were once related by his acquaintances in the Cherokee Nation. One of such

Ross, S. W.

A BAD OMEEN

12734

- 2 -

stories related to an incident which occurred rather early in the wartime, that is, after the organization of the Union Indian Brigade.

Having occasion to spend a night in what was then the Saline District of the Cherokee Nation, Colonel Philips found accommodation at the home of a Cherokee woman who has been referred to as "old Mrs. Conseen". Her given name cannot be learned, but she was the mother of Frank Conseen, a Cherokee Union Soldier, who served as one of Colonel Philips' orderlies. During a number of years after the close of the War, Frank Conseen served as a member of the National Council, or as a member of the Cherokee Senate, from Saline District.

Upon sitting down at the table for breakfast on the morning after he had arrived at the Conseen home, Colonel Philips remarked that he had experienced a peculiar dream during the night. The dream, he said, was that he suddenly lost one of his teeth. Old Mrs. Conseen, as was related, immediately became fawncast in countenance and said to her guest that the dream portended trouble. Something bad had occurred, the old woman asserted, and advised Colonel Philips

ROSS, S. W.

A BAD OMEN

12734

- 3 -

that he should return to his home in Kansas. But he apparently gave little thought to the matter and soon rode away with his men.

Some days later a message arrived to the effect that the oldest son of Colonel Philips, a youth of perhaps fourteen years of age, had been overtaken by a blizzard in Kansas and was frozen to death. The youth, it was related, attempted to overtake a party of men he had started out to give chase to some wolves. The pony ridden by the boy had not sufficient speed to come up with the party, members of which were unaware that the boy was following them. Then the blizzard arose and in the freezing wind the boy lost his life.

Old Mrs. Conseen, when she heard the account of the tragedy, was convinced that the "sign", that is the dream concerning the tooth, was given Colonel Philips as a warning that tragedy had occurred in his home. Many of the old time Indian people were firm believers in signs and omens. The above incident was related by Miss E. Jane Ross, Park Hill, long ago deceased.

The above story was told to Elizabeth by her brother S. W. Ross of Park Hill, Oklahoma.