

Field Worker: Jennie Selfridge  
 March 3, 1937

LEGEND by Jim McCurtain  
 Marietta, Okla. (L. Route).

TITLE THE LEGEND (HISTORY) OF THE  
CHICKASAWS AND CHOCTAWS.

\*\*\*\*\*

A Chickasaw Indian's Version of Tribal History

Abijah Colbert died north of the Washita near Tishomingo at the age of ninety-six years. I-to-tubby was the Chickasaw medicine man. Na-hi-cha, or Yellow Wolf, was the prophet and lived near Wapanucka. He died at the age of one hundred and twelve years. When I was a very small boy, the three would get together, light a pipe, and sit around the fire and puff smoke.

~~----- According to their stories, at one time the Chickasaws and~~  
 Choctaws were brothers and lived together somewhere in a distant land probably Asia or Europe. They became dissatisfied with their home and started out together with all the members of their tribe to find a new home. After traveling for a great distance on the water, they finally saw land. They landed at the water's edge and found a straight stick.

The Chickasaws always had three men who governed the tribe; one was the prophet who received the word from above, another was the medicine man, and another Chief. At this time, the chief of the tribe was Pio-mingo. After finding the stick, the prophet told the Choctaws and Chickasaws to journey for one day. That night they camped and put down the stick between the two camps, and built a fire near it. The

-2-

499

next morning the stick was pointing slightly toward the east. This stick had been furnished by the Great Creator to show the way.

They kept on their journey and finally reached the Sak-til-hi-afa or Mississippi River. Here they gathered dead logs, and made a raft, and went across. They journeyed on and each night the stick pointed toward the east. Finally one morning the stick was leaning just a little toward the east, and the Choctaws said, "This is far enough."

The Chickasaws wanted to go on until the stick leaned straight like it was found. The Choctaws said, "Stay". So they took lots and the majority of votes ruled. Since the Choctaws always outnumbered the Chickasaws they out-voted them.

The Chickasaw Chief said, "Follow me", so they took the stick and went on and all the Chickasaws followed. When they started off, the Choctaws became very angry, and picked up their weapons and followed. The Choctaw Chief called them back, saying, "Let them go. They are our enemies." The Chickasaws followed the stick until it pointed toward heaven. The Chief said, "Here we rest."

No one knew just how long they had been there when an enemy came out to destroy them. These enemies found they could not conquer the Chickasaws. When enemies came, it was just like in the time of the Israelites. When enemies came, clouds would always come up over the Chickasaws .

Pas-to-tubby was prophet and talked to clouds. When word came to Pas-to-tubby telling him that enemies were coming to destroy them, the command from clouds said, "You must have feast before enemies reach you. " After the feast the Chief commanded by word from Heaven said,

-3-

500

"I must have two hundred strong warriors and no more."

What ever commandment was received that was what they kept. They were never conquered. In their greatest war the enemy came one thousand men to one Chickasaw. The word came from above saying,

"One thousand men to one Chickasaw coming to destroy and take land, but don't have ill feeling and don't be discouraged. I am with you. I will put this one thousand men into your hand." These enemies came and attacked them and the Chickasaws mowed them down.

During the American Revolution, George Washington, went through several battles, and was getting very short of men. One battle was almost greater than he could bear. He sent word to headquarters for some nation to help him out. Realizing that the Chickasaws were a small but unconquerable tribe, they wrote a note and sent men to the Chickasaw Chief, that George Washington wanted help in battle.

The Chief never hesitated a minute, but called his two hundred strong warriors, and went with men who brought the note to George Washington, and when the enemy came the Chickasaws helped win the battle. Later George Washington became President, and when he was President always loved the Chickasaws, and made a treaty with them that they would always be protected.

The Government became the guardian over the Chickasaws. Several years after, the Chickasaw Prophet told them that their guardian would forget them and would take all of their country. He also said, "They will make a treaty, prepare it, and present it to you to sign, and force you to sign it, but they will forget to keep treaty, and will put you in want and poverty."

"They will force you to reside west of the Mississippi River, and will guarantee you that country forever. But they will take that country from you again. That will not be the last stand. They will become powerless, on the eve when that country loses its power you can see by signs. They will be split up among one another, and their minds will be worried. They will have roads that have tracks which will look like snakes crawling." --

And according to the story as told me by Abijah Colbert, after this time the people (whites) would lose their country and the Chickasaws would reign again.

---

FIELDWORKERS NOTE: The McCurtain legend was similar to one in Malone's "History of the Chickasaw Nation." I asked him if he had read that book. He said, he had. But the legend was told to him years before he had seen the book.

---