

~~ROSS, S. W. REINSTATEMENT OF SAMUEL SMITH IN #13887
KEE-TOO-SAM 386~~

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INTERVIEW.

13987.

Hattie Turner
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Interview with S. W. Ross,
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

"REINSTATEMENT OF SAMUEL SMITH IN KEE-TOO-WAH"

Among the earliest members of the Kee-too-wah society, noted organization of the native Cherokees, was Samuel Smith, who bore the rank of captain in a company of the Union Indian brigade in Civil War days. Probably Smith had been one of the organizers of the society, and he was also a Baptist preacher. At conventions of the National party, numbers of whose members were of the Kee-too-wah society, Smith was conspicuous until his apostasy which occurred along in 1887, when Smith left the National party and joined the Downing party, many of whose members had adhered to the Confederacy in the Civil War. The indignant Kee-too-wahs promptly expelled Captain Samuel Smith. His name was stricken from the rolls and his presence at conventions was not desired.

Time passed away and the time for another election came. Smith had expected, it has been said, to have received the nomination as Principal Chief or at least as the assistant

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Chief again. But he received neither, and decided that he had been used largely in order to influence the native voters in the campaign in which he had been elected.

Therefore, the old captain desired to return to the party in which were many of his friends, and leading members of the National party and of the Kee-too-wah society were approached. Much talk was indulged in and finally decision was made to reinstate the erring member, the time being set for the proceedings at the convention held in August, of 1890. It had been provided by the founders of the society that a convention be held each year early in August, and when the convention assembled various matters were disposed of, and then came the afternoon when Captain Smith should be taken back into the Kee-too-wah fold.

In impressive array the head captain, the minor captains and officers of the Kee-too-wah society filed out into an open space. Members of the society assembled in long lines. Outside of the line masses of men, women and children watched the proceedings. The head captain delivered a very impressive and eloquent oration and overhead on tall poles fluttered

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the historic flag of the Kee-too-wah, the flag of the United States, and other symbols.

As the ceremony began, black clouds had rolled up in the southwest and the atmosphere grew still and sultry but regardless of the threatening weather the men of the Kee-too-wah continued their ceremonial. The black cloud was borne with great rapidity and behind this clouded mass the erstwhile black clouds grew grayish green. Rumbling thunder arose and jagged lightning zig-zagged across the sky. The claps of thunder were deafening, but the Kee-too-wahs paid no attention whatsoever. Finally the ceremony was completed with exception of handshaking. The head captain grasped the hand of Captain Samuel Smith, and then the rain came down in torrents, but the long lines of Kee-too-wahs seemed unaware of any disturbance; they kept in alignment and each and all in turn gave the hand of fellowship to their reinstated brother. Soaking wet, the members then dispersed until the rainfall ceased, but the storm could have continued for hours without causing them to disperse had necessity kept them in line.