

INDEX CARDS

Civil War--Creek Station

Opothleyohola

Civil War refugees--Northern

THE FLIGHT OF OPUITHLI YAHOLA'S MUSKOGEEES
An interview with James Scott, Greenleaf Town
(tulwa), Okemah, Oklahoma

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I was about nine or ten years old when the stirring events and the flight of the Muskogees took place. Of course, I did not realize that there was a real war. The talk and the many ruthless raids and destroying of homes by the McIntosh Creeks convinced me that there was discord. This destruction was heaped on the Muskogees who were remaining loyal to Opuithli Yahola.

Opuithli Yahola's heart was sad at all the war talk. He visited the homes of his followers or some of the Indians and gave them encouragement to face all these things, but above all things to stay out of the war. It was no affair of the Indians. In spite of all these pleadings and warnings of Opuithli Yahola, many of the Indians of the Creek faction were induced to join with the McIntosh Creeks. Many times Opuithli Yahola expressed the desire to leave. It did not take long for this desire to materialize.

I did not fully realize or understand why I was given orders to round up the cattle. I wondered at the vast amount of cattle being killed and the meat being dried, the pork being cooked down, and all the other numerous

preparations. At all the homes of the neighbors, I saw all sorts of preparations with little knowledge of its meaning.

As time passed, the neighboring Indians gathered and joined with the other Indians at Helluby Creek, northwest of what is now Boley, Oklahoma. We were joined by other groups and in turn joined other larger groups. These were the Indians that Opuithli Yahola had mobilized near the junction of the North Fork and the Deep Fork of the Canadian River, near the present town of Bufala and consisted almost exclusively of the Mustang faction of which he was the recognized grand old man who had led them only a few years before over the Trail of Tears from their homes on the Coosa and Tallapoosa in Alabama.

I was given the task to help drive the cattle, but I relinquished my job over to the older boys when we joined the main body.

My family consisted of a mother, Larney Scott; father, Artuss Yahola, and a sister, Lizzie. My mother never returned from this trip but was buried in Kansas. My father died after his return to this country.

The first command to halt was brought by a McIntosh negro slave, a messenger commanding us to halt. He rode the length of the wagon train issuing these orders. Many of

our men answered, "We are not going to stop; we are on our way." The negro had accomplished his duty and returned to his comrades. Seeing that we could not be detained, our pursuers made the attack. The attack was made on a hill side and I would not know where this hill is now or about where it was. Our women, children, and some of the men were sent on with the wagons, teams, and cattle. The rest remained to check the attack. The men hid behind the bushes, trees and large rocks. The enemy, making the up-grade attack could not successfully accomplish anything. Our men took the chase and returned with a captured flag. I have no knowledge of the results of obtaining the flag or what became of it.

La Crosse, Opukli's Viola's loyal assistance were crossed the creek river. There is only one crossing and only one place to cross. The constant pulling of the cattle, wagons, and men made the up-grade slippery. Those that were already across waited until the last was safely across before the journey was again taken up. This required a lot of time to cross.

Another attack from the rear was attempted at this time. As before, the women, children, and some of the men were directed to proceed on while the advance was checked.

These were not the only attacks or sufferings that we encountered on this trip. We faced many hardships, we were often without food, the children cried from weariness and the cold, we fled and left our wagons with much needed pro-

visions, clothing and other necessities, many of our friends, loved ones perished from sickness, and we all suffered from the cold as it was during the winter time that we were on our flight to a neutral country.

When our provisions went low, some of the members of the tribe turned to eating horse flesh.

One time we saw a little baby sitting on its little blanket in the woods. Every one was running because an attack was expected and no one had the time to stop and pick up the child. As it saw the people running by, the little child began to wave its little hands. The child had no knowledge that he had been deserted.

After we had reached our destination, (Mexico) food and clothing was given to the Indians by the government on every Saturday. The stage at Lugo (Mexico) until the close of the war was used to bring the Indians to the place where we were permitted to return to our homes or to the place where we had lived before our flight.

I remember an incident that occurred while we were still at Fort Gibson. There were some men returning from Muskogee to Fort Gibson with supplies when an unexpected attack was made upon the wagon train with the supplies. This attack was made by the McIntosh Creeks or part of this faction. No one was hurt as no shots were fired, but all supplies as well as the wagons were completely destroyed by fire started by the raiders. Much of the supplies were taken by the raiders. The government gave us cattle before we left

Fort Gibson for our homes.

I do not remember the exact crossings or exact spots of the different attacks, neither do I remember anything of the burial of our leader, Oquithli Yahola.