

SMITH, H. C.

INTERVIEW

#12572

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Billie Byrd,
Journalist,
December 30, 1937.

Interview with H. C. Settles
Age 79, (colored)
Boley, Oklahoma.

Old man Peg, a peg-legged man, was an old white living around Fort Gibson about and during the time of John Ross, once chief of the Cherokees. This old man figured in and was always usually present at all the tribal council meetings that were called and held.

This old man Peg was not rich or influential in any way but because he was old, he had become recognized as a man who knew a lot about the Indians, especially of the Cherokees. He claimed to be of Indian blood but from all appearances he was a white man and his eyes were blue. Even though he said he was of Indian blood, the Indians were doubtful and they were suspicious of his claim.

But it seems that when the enrollment of the Indians was under way or when the identity of any claimant as to being a person of Indian blood was

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doubtful, old man Peg was usually called forward for verification. He knew the full bloods when he saw one and whether any of them had white blood in them.

Again, during that time, there lived an old colored man, black as coal, who was called old man Gunn. People used to say his age was about one hundred years. He also had lived in the country in and near Fort Gibson for a long time and knew a lot of the people there, so he was also called to identify any of the persons who were Indians or claimed they were of Indian or mixed blood.

It was these two who would attend and drop in at every council meeting called and held by the Indians. Just as sure as there was a signing of any papers to be done by and for the Indians, full or mixed blood, these two would always be depended upon to give the identification for any person who was unknown.

During the time of the enrollment, these two took the part of identifying the persons who came forward declaring themselves to be Indian or mixed blood.

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A man by the name of Milford was in charge of signing up the Indians and mixed bloods and enrolling them for allotments but old man Gunn and old man Peg were called for they had been around the country a long time and they were the only ones who knew a lot.

SETTLES, AMERICAN ASSOCIATION. MEMBERSHIP, 1960

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