

McINTOSH, SCOTT WALDO

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Interview with Scott Waldo McIntosh
 Citizen of the Creek Tribe
 (negro) Boynton, Oklahoma, Route 2.

OLD INDIAN DAYS

L. W. Wilson Field Worker
 July 12, 1937.

Creek Indians in Georgia
 and Alabama

We remember that before the migration of the eastern Indians to the Indian Territory, the Creeks lived in what is now Alabama and Georgia.

In these states, the Creeks had what was known as town people, who lived in villages. Each village was ruled over by a chief, known in Creek as the "Mico". All important questions relating to their people were decided by the king of all the villages. Understand, each town had a town king as well as a town warrior. If the king was unable to decide the questions involved, the town warriors were called to assist in arriving at a decision. The decision was then given to the chief or Mico who would act for all his people.

It was similar to our present day governor (Mico); House of Senate, (Town Kings); House of Representatives, (Town Warriors).

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The Creeks lived in log cabins with thatched roofs and raised small crops of corn. They made hominy or what they called skinned corn. From hickory nut meats, cooked with crushed corn, they made a very appetizing dish called "Sofka".

Every year the Creeks held a great festival. Some have called it a green corn dance but in the early days in Georgia and Alabama, and likewise in the Indian Territory the Creeks called it "Buss".

Each year in the month of July they held their Buss. At each gathering was their doctor or medicine man. The first four days of Buss their activity was confined to ^{Medical treatments.} the medicine used usually was called "Elisna-lowe", meaning red root. This medicine purged them as well as made them vomit. The object was to cleanse their system of all impurities. On the fourth day, they were required by the medicine man to take a hot bath in the concoction of "Elisna-lowe", and after coming out of the bath the doctor would pour cold water on them to avoid their taking cold. After the bath on the fourth day, the doctor would then bleed them. This method of bleeding was done by usually

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scratching their arms or legs with some sharp instrument until the blood began to flow. With four days treatment, they were allowed and did eat all of any and every thing they desired. Meats of all kinds and all types of vegetables, including green corn.

They would barbecue deer, bear, wild turkeys, and roast green corn. They would lay aside the thoughts of all wars, feuds, private quarrels, and all other things that were unpleasant among themselves and each and everyone of them joined in a great dance and feast.

The music furnished for the dances was usually a deer skin drawn tightly over the open end of a hollow tree or a clay pot. On this they would beat with sticks and sing. Later on, possibly from this method, came the tom-toms. As the men danced, they would also make a rattling noise. Around their legs below the knees were attached all kinds of shells and in them were placed tiny pebbles. These made a racket something like the present day baby rattler.

The men's clothing consisted of buckskin breeches, ornamented with beads, small shells, and sometimes buttons,

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beaded jackets of buckskin and a little later velvet jackets secured from traders. These velvet jackets were literally covered with beads of all colors and were of many designs. Buckskin moccasins were used for shoes and if head gear was used it was a cap made of hides and furs. Many of the men wore ear-rings in their ears as well as the women.

The women's clothing consisted of a hide or fur wrapped around them in blanket fashion. They wore moccasins like the men and went bare headed. After arrival in the Indian Territory the Government gave the women blankets of wool to wear and fancy colored handkerchiefs to use on their heads. Many fancy blankets were received from traders at trading posts.

Small babies were carried by their mothers in baskets tied to their backs. The baskets were made from bark of trees, by the mother before the arrival of the baby. Later they were carried on the mothers back by wrapping the baby in the blanket which the mothers wore around their bodies.

Children between the ages of say two to twelve years, wore breech clouts made of skins. There were known as "Flaps". In later years, long tailed shirts were used until they reached the age of twelve years, and then they dressed like their parents.

Removal of the Creeks
To the Indian Territory

The Governor of Georgia, George Troup, insisted that the Indians be moved west and let the white men take over all the lands of that state. Alabama officials also complained likewise. This was about the year 1823.

All of the Town Kings and Town Warriors of the entire Creek tribe met and decided they would not move away from their beloved country under any circumstances. At this meeting they also decided they would not war with the white man, realizing it would only cause more deaths and sufferings for they could not cope with the white men's warfare. They decided they would stay there on their land and die of starvation before they would leave.

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Among the Creeks was one, William McIntosh, who favored removal, and he so notified the United States Commission that he would call a meeting of the Creeks. This was to be a secret meeting of just those who favored removal though they were in the minority.

If they were agreeable after the meeting he would make a treaty. McIntosh signed a treaty for the removal at Indian Springs, Georgia. This treaty was to trade acre for acre of their lands in Georgia and Alabama for lands in Indian Territory, between the Canadian and Arkansas Rivers.

Colonel William McIntosh was not a full-blood Creek. He was a half-breed scotch. He had a brother named Una McIntosh. The McIntoshs owned a number of negroes, and the father of Scott McIntosh, William McIntosh, was named after Colonel William McIntosh, and lived with the Colonel and his brother at the time the treaty was made at Indian Springs. The treaty was called the "Indian Springs Treaty". This treaty also provided that the Creeks would be moved to the Indian Territory at the Government's expense.

The major body of the Creeks bitterly refused to abide by the treaty made by McIntosh, saying it was unlawful,

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but the Government maintained it was lawful and that they must abide by it.

They, the major body, accused Colonel William McIntosh of selling their country, of treason and of every thing unbecoming to their tribe. Other treaties were made in conjunction with the Indian Springs Treaty by two men named Sam Hawkins and Ben Hawkins and they, too, were lambasted for their acts.

Colonel William McIntosh, Sam Hawkins and Ben Hawkins were tried under the Creek laws and were sentenced to death for their acts of betrayal.

At the McIntosh home, the Hawkins men implicated in the treaty lived together with their women and children and refused to allow the sentence to be executed. The Government also intervened but this did not stop them from claiming their rights under the Creek laws. The Creeks set fire to the building and when they ran out William McIntosh was shot and killed. Sam Hawkins was caught

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and they hanged him. They shot and wounded Ben Hawkins, but he escaped.

The Indian Springs Treaty was made in 1825 and after all had been said and done, this treaty was finally held null and void and another treaty was made by delegates of the Creeks in Washington in 1826. The treaty of 1826 was similar to that of 1825 only it was signed by other parties.

Una McIntosh of course was in favor of the treaty made by his brother, William McIntosh and when the Government agreed to move him and his negroes to the Indian Territory at the Government's expense, together with other concessions, he moved and settled in the Creek Nation near the present Fern Mountain. This is some four miles northwest of the present town of Muskogee, Oklahoma. With him came the father of Scott McIntosh (the party interviewed and known as William McIntosh).

Records indicate the money was to be received by the Creeks for their lands in Georgia and Alabama but Scott McIntosh states much of it is still due and unpaid.

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The McIntosh family arrived in the Indian Territory in 1833, and set about farming, building homes, raising some live stock, etc. When all were doing well and things were in a shape to make life worth living, then came the Civil war. No Indians wanted to engage in war. They knew the tragedy of war and shunned it. This was true of Una McIntosh and his negroes, but the time come when it was impossible to be neutral. Una McIntosh, the brother of Colonel McIntosh, as well as his negroes, joined with the Northern Army. Scott McIntosh, the party interviewed, states none of his people however were slaves of McIntosh.

CIVIL WAR

The Crooks were divided between the North and South. They had battles among themselves and those of the North refuged to Kansas. There were thousands of them in refugee camps who were fed from army stores. These Indian

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many of them, returned to the Northern Army and captured the Capital of the Cherokee Nation which was Tahlequah. Trouble arose among the officers and they again returned to Kansas. Even the women and children of these Creek northern soldiers followed them and they too went back to the refugee camps in Kansas. The Cherokee Nation was again controlled by the South.

Una McIntosh, the Creek, and William McIntosh the negro were under the command of the Northern Army. William McIntosh was stationed at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, and worked first as a scout under General Blount and Captain Scott. Una McIntosh, the Creek, was in the Infantry stationed at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory. They both fought in the battle at Honey Springs on Big Elk Creek, during July 1863. Una was killed, presumably, for he never returned. William McIntosh came through successfully and was later assigned to move the Creek families to Kansas to refugee camps by wagon train. This was during August 1863. At what they called Blue Ridge, which

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was at the upper end of Bird Creek, they were attacked by the confederates, and many were killed for they were practically defenseless, having only a few weapons. Their best horses, food stuff, and clothing were confiscated. They were compelled to continue on foot and without food and clothing.

Many died of exposure while enroute. They arrived at Fort Scott, Kansas in the dead of winter, bare-footed, tattered and torn, sick and hungry. They were given first-aid treatment and fed but because of congested conditions they were moved on to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Small-pox broke out in these camps and the result was that ~~hundreds of them died.~~ Sanitation was comparatively nil in these over-crowded camps.

William McIntosh returned to Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, in the spring of 1864, and remained there until the close of the War. He answered to the call of General Blunt as his commissary agent and was instrumental in the issuing of rations to the soldiers and their families, and others near the fort who were sympathetic with the North.

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Reconstruction Days after the Civil War

William McIntosh became United States Commissary agent after the war and while still stationed at Fort Gibson, was solely responsible for the issuing of food and clothing to the Creek and Osage Indians for a number of years. When relieved from this position he moved near where his old home was before the war in the Creek Nation.

The Creek Nation was in a pitiable condition. Many of the Creeks had been killed or died of hunger and exposure. Their homes and barns were burned to ashes by opposing armies. Their horses had been stolen and their cattle killed and eaten or left to go wild in the cane brakes and their farms were grown up with weeds and underbrush. Surely the poor Creeks had suffered for no good cause on the part of any of them. They were aware of this, although an enmity still existed between them. All they really had left was their land, and now they were being told they would have to share a part of it with their wild Indian neighbors back in the states.

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People however began to rehabilitate their homes and farms and finally agreed to be peaceful among themselves. They swore allegiance to the Federal Government, and allowed other Indians to take part of their lands for a nominal sum. They let the negroes share in their tribal lands, and permitted railroads to take a portion of their lands for right-of-ways. How much more could they agree to than this, rather than to be made to move out again? Records will disclose the amounts the Creeks received for their land for these purposes, but Scott McIntosh says it was the paltry amount of thirty cents per acre and today it^{is} worth thirty dollars or more per acre.

There was lots of game, timber, wild fruits and berries and the Creeks, you might say, had to adopt their primitive life and customs as mentioned, before their removal from Georgia and Alabama. As time passed on they acquired more and more and soon assumed and profited by the white man's ideas as to farming, manner, dress, building of homes, home life, schools, missions, churches etc.

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Wild Indians began to move onto the lands assigned them for their reservations. The cattle men in Texas started driving their cattle through the Territory to the northern markets for as yet the railroads were not built.

The plains Indians were savages, desperate, and mean and were of much annoyance and spread fear to the herders of cattle. They would kill the cattle for food, scalp the herders as well as emigrants, and later fought the settlers.

On the plains were many buffalo which were food and clothing for these wild Indians. These buffalo herds were killed off, not only by the Indians but by buffalo hunters from the states, as there was no restriction on killing them. When buffalo began to grow scarce the wild Indians would invade the hunting grounds of the Creek Nation, all contrary to any agreements. This made the Creeks very angry and many a skirmish ensued between the Creeks and different tribes of wild Indians.

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Soldiers were stationed at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, and at other forts for a number of years. They were used to keep down all kinds of uprisings at elections, at court houses and for protecting emigrants and trying to confine these lawless wild Indians to the reservations, to which they had been assigned.

Creek Tribal Form of Government

The Creeks had a written constitution which provided for a Principal Chief, House of Kings, House of Warriors, Judges, Light horsemen and other petty officers. These officers were elected by the citizenship of the tribe of the Nation and the officers of the districts were elected by citizens in the district in which they resided.

Records also show in the offices of the Five Tribes the different towns in the Creek Nation, and the boundaries of such towns; so I will eliminate this and speak entirely of Arkansas Town, said Scott McIntosh.

My father, William McIntosh, was a king in the House of Kings and my father-in-law, Jake Brown, was a warrior in

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the House of Warriors of Arkansas Town in the Creek Nation, of which I am very proud. - Many times they have talked to me of older times in Georgia, as well as things which confronted them here in the Indian Territory. I could tell you of all the payments and annuities and what they covered, but will say the records are the best evidence, so it's useless to try for me to recall them in chronological order or otherwise. If there are any particular payments involved which need recalling I will gladly tell of them.

Scott McIntosh states that his father, William McIntosh, was also selected by the Creek Nation as its agent of the Loyal Creeks who pushed their claims for their losses during the Civil War. He says that his father has made trips to Washington, D. C., meeting the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs and officers of the War Department, showing to them how reasonable is the amount of twelve million dollars due the Loyal Creeks who fought and died for the union of the states. He is proud to know he is a son of William McIntosh, even though he is an humble negro. He claims six hundred thousand dollars is still due.

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Scott McIntosh attributes the Green Peach War to other causes than just a rebellion reprisal because of Sam Checote being elected over Spieche (Isparhechar) Principal Chief. Much credence may be placed in his belief as well as considerable light thrown on the subject. Scott was a member of the Spieche army and was familiar at all times with what was being done from start to finish.

Sam Checote was duly elected, defeating Spieche for Principal Chief. Checote represented the southern Creeks and Spieche the northern or Loyal Creeks. In short, Checote was a Democrat and Spieche was a Republican. The Spieche faction conceded the election. All was well until \$200,000.00 representing interest money due the Loyal Creeks came by express to Muskogee over the M. K. & T. Railroad. When the Spieche faction discovered this, they awaited the disbursement of this money. The disbursement was finally made by the Principal Chief, Sam Checote, and only members of the Checote faction received same.

Due to this disbursement, Spieche and all of his faction felt, and feel today, those who still live, that this was wrong and unfair. It should have been divided

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by and between all Creek and Freedmen.

Demands were made by the Loyal Creeks for their pro rata and they were refused. This started the rebellion. Spieche and his forces were whipped and were captured by the United States soldiers from Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, in the Sac Fox country, because the Sac and Fox Indians complained of warfare on their grounds. The remnant of the Spieche army was brought to Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, and put in camp and held prisoners until Spieche signed an agreement to cease fighting. As yet, the \$200,000.00 in no part ^{been} has/received by any member, or members of the Spieche faction of the Loyal Creeks.

While Spieche and his forces were in the Sac, Fox country a message was desired to be delivered by the women of the Loyal Creeks to Spieche to notify him of the coming of the soldiers from Fort Gibson. It was their desire that he surrender without resistance, but how could they get the message through? No man could get through the lines of the Checote Army and

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possibly not a woman. One woman, Hager Meyers, who lives today four miles west of Muskogee, Oklahoma, on Highway 62 and 64 near Memorial Park Cemetery, shouted out, "I'll go carry the message to surrender. If I get through well enough, if not, then I have done my all and the best I know to do, to save further blood shed, for a few dollars due each of us". She was furnished the best horse they had and started for the Sac and Fox agency. She was stopped many times but by her cunning ways and ideas and many falsehoods she reached Spieche and delivered the message. The message was read to the rank and file, and the majority shouted "let's all surrender to the blue coats when they get here." Some still held out saying 'no we will die fighting", but the majority always wins, and they surrendered, as before stated.

Comment

Scott McIntosh says his father came into possession of the big gray horse ridden by Captain Scott at the battle

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of Honey Springs, and when a boy many times he rode him. His father loved the horse almost as well as he loved his children.

Other than Una McIntosh, the brother of Colonel McIntosh, who was killed in Georgia, there were also two more brothers of the Colonel's who came to the Indian Territory. Their names as he called them were Cub and Freeland McIntosh, but he could tell little of them.

Scott reiterates that while the Government today is appropriating money for labor to be spent through the W.P. A. it would seem fitting to him, that the State Historical Society bring pressure to bear in some way to maintain old family cemeteries of historical value, as well as erected markers on sights of battle grounds which played such important parts in our Civil War. In our own state he called specific attention to old Fort Davis, Honey Springs, North Fork Town and a number of

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old cemeteries. Why not appropriate, he said, a few dollars each month to hager Meyers who carried the message to Spieche, saving the lives of hundreds of men. If need be, see that she is given at her death, a resting place in our National Cemetery at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, in the colored section, with a head stone bearing an inscription telling of her service and valor displayed in a great cause.

Scott McIntosh is sixty-seven years old, and is growing feeble and has lost the sight of one eye. He lives on his wife's allotment about two and a quarter miles north of Boynton, Oklahoma, with his wife and children.

William McIntosh Scott's father, if he lived today, would be as near as can be figured one hundred and two years old. He said just before he died he was seventy six years old. He died in 1911 and is buried in the old McIntosh Cemetery near the village of Yahola, Oklahoma.