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Investigator, Pete W. Cole,  
December 29, 1937.

Interview with Austin Thompson,

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Austin Thompson, a full blood Choctaw Indian, an itinerant preacher of the Holiness Faith, has in his young days heard of the old Indian days, has been told of the incidents, traditions and customs and himself has seen some of the ways which he tells in brief:

There is still an unanswered question hanging over the heads of the so-called American Indians as to where, when, and why they were all here. But since they themselves are a noted and famous race of people, nothing must be unnoticed of their days. They are a race of warlike people who have fought for what rightly belonged to them; who worshipped their God on High, ready and willing to show friendship or hatred; and who believed that to forgive was an unknown subject but that revenge was necessary when once mistreated. This was their thought and belief until the white missionary came over to this country and began to teach them the right and

wrong, which was quickly heeded. The Choctaws lived in what is now Mississippi long before the white people ever came to America and of course their mounds, artificial places, rivers, creeks, mountains and bluffs in that state were named by them.

The Choctaw country in Oka-it-tib-ih-he County, Mississippi, and the Chickasaw country were the scene of many a hard struggle between the contending warriors, the entrenchments enclosing the Shakchi Humma (Red Crawfish) old fort, and the many evidences such as rusted tomahawks, arrowheads, human bones, teeth and fragments of skulls that were plowed up for many years proved the Shakchi Humma people and the Choctaws and Chickasaws battled. It is known the Shakchi Hummas were greatly outnumbered but that they fought for every inch of the ground and yielded only because they were outnumbered. They did not confine their battles to forts and entrenchments but fought as circumstance offered them. They fought in small bodies, some in open fields, behind trees, stumps and logs, each seeking every possible advantage of his enemy.

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After many years the Choctaws and the Chickasaws had settled east of the Mississippi River, a Choctaw Chief named Shakchi Humma recrossed the Mississippi River and established a colony under the name of their Chief Shakchi Humma in what is now Arkansas. Then followed three years of battle to exterminate the Shakchi Humma Nation, one of the battles being Oski Hlopeh (stripped Cane). It used to be told that the Choctaws and the Chickasaws took the path to exterminate the enemies or be exterminated themselves. There the large parties of Shakchi Humma hunters camped on Noxubee Creek a corruption of Choctaw name Nak-sho-bin (offensive odor). This was the name of a creek and ~~also a county in Mississippi. It took the name accord-~~

ing to a Choctaw tradition from a great battle fought on the banks of this creek. The people slayed were thrown in the creek by the Choctaws which when decomposed polluted the air for miles around, thus its name.

They fought day and night, though few in numbers, until the Choctaws and the Chickasaws finally broke through the line and made a rush at them over the

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feebly weakened defended walls of logs and dirt and were met by those who remained of the Shakchi Humma and who were killed by the Choctaws and the Chickesaws. Only one of the whole tribe was left and that was a little girl about sixteen years of age, who was spared on account of her beauty. She was spared by the Choctaws and was adopted by them and she lived to be a ripe old age. Such was the story of Shukchi Humma who were exterminated by the Choctaw and the Chickasaws, as told by the very old Choctaws now living who were told the story when they were boys.

Of the descendants of the girl (saved at the tragic destruction of her tribe because of her beauty), one became a Chief of the Choctaws and died in 1884 at his home a few miles east of what is now Atoka. His name was Coleman Cole. \* The Shakchi Humma were the Muskogees or Creeks.

The Choctaws, like the rest of their race, had no written languages or laws and the government rested alone on custom and usage growing out of their possessions and their wants. They had no money, and if one needed

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anything some other party had, trade consisted alone in mutual exchange. There were no works for hire, there were no contracts; hence, the judges, lawyers, sheriffs and jails were unknown to them. There were no beggars, no wandering tramps, no orphan children unprovided for in their country, and deformity was almost unknown, which proves that nature in the wild forest of the wilderness is true to her type.

The chief had no crown to wear on his head, no sceptre, no body guard, no power to give validity to his commands but sustained his authority alone upon the good faith and opinions of his tribe. It was often told that a President of the United States set a date to meet the Chief of Choctaw Tribes who was Coleman Cole. Upon that date the President and his staff arrived at the place directed by friends who said that there was where the chief lived. Upon their arrival, they noticed a man lying down under a tree in a shade some distance from the house with nothing on only a garment wrapped around his waist, true to the style of the old ancient Choctaws, and

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unconcerned as to what is going on at the house. The messenger ran up and told him that the President of the United States had arrived to see him, and his only answer was that if the President wished to talk with him he might come out to the tree as he had no time to go to the President and besides it was too hot to walk.

No Choctaw ever worshipped his fellow man or submitted his will to the humiliating subordinations of another, but with that sentiment of devotion that passed beyond the region of humanity -- only these are paid homage.

The Choctaws have maintained their independence and their love of country, but they had no alphabet or written language and a thought or idea was conveyed to the eye by rude imitation. An old painting or drawing on trees or rock told its tale to the Choctaws. They had no calendar but could tell the months by the full or crescent moons; the years by the killing of the vegetation by the wintry frosts. Thus, for two years ago,

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he would say "Hashuk illi tuklo," (grass dead two). grass killed twice or more literally, two killings of the grass ago.

The sun was called Hashi or nitak huski (day sun) and the moon, huski tekchi (wife of the sun) or hush ninak aya (sun travel in the night).

Their almanac was kept by the flight of the fowls of the air, the coming and going of which announced them the progress of the advancing and departing seasons, while the beasts of the field or forest gave warning of the approaching storm or changing of the weather. The sun marked the hour of the day.

In order to keep posted, a bundle of sticks containing the exact number of sticks as there were days from the day of appointment to the appointed date were kept; and every morning one stick was taken out and thrown away until the last stick was thrown away, which announced the arrival of the new year or appointed day.

One of the old traditions of the old Indians of the old days is that they used to communicate with an eagle who was their prophet and they used to look to him for



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knowledge of the enemies' advancement toward them. The eagle being their lookout man would notify all of the people of the advancement of their enemies and was a high priced bird who told them of their hereafter. When the white people came to this country they deprived the Indian of his eagle and today it is an emblem of the United States when once it was a useful bird and a prophet to them in their days.

\* Pete Cole, who writes in typical Indian style, is the great-great-grandson of the Choctaw Chief, Coleman Cole, a descendant of the beautiful Shakchi Humma Mad don.- Ed.