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WEDDINGS*--MUSKOGEE-CREEK CUSTOM

Interview with Millie Johnson,
Arbeka town, (tulwa)
Age 63, Muskogee Tribe,
14 miles southwest o.
Okemah, Oklahoma.

Billie Byrd, Field Worker,
Indian-Pioneer History S-149
April 26, 1937.

I t was not of my own choosins to marry when I did. My
uncles picked a man they thought suitable for me.

If a woman of the Muskogee-Creek tribe desired to get
married she was not free to choose whoever she desired, and
the ideal time to marry was at the age of twenty-five.

The uncles or parents, who often made the selections
of husband or wife, often looked for the traits of a good
hunter or a good fire builder in a man. The man was not
only supposed to always kill deer but other game as well,
and the fire builder was not to only set a fire but also be
industrious and not lazy to arise in the mornings.

There were always two witnesses for a man and two
witnesses for a woman to complete the bonds of matrimony.
These two witnesses were for the purpose of settling domestic
troubles and to establish peace between wife and husband if
a dispute or any misunderstanding arose.

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If a wife or husband died, the widow or widower was declared a mourner by the uncles. This mourner was to stay within the confines of his home for two or three months, some longer time, without combing the hair. This was to signify that the mourner was too heart-broken and still revered the memory of a deceased. The mourner during his confinement of the home was ever to dwell upon the memory of the deceased.

At the expiration of the set time of mourning, the uncle of the deceased combed the hair of the mourner. After the combing rite, the mourner was then taken to some entertainment or dance and was instructed that it was time to forget the death of the beloved for whom mourning had been observed. The mourner was then free to live his own life.

Yet, if a widower or widow desired to marry again, they were not free to choose their own mates. The uncles of the widow or widower was instrumental in choosing a wife or husband for the widow or widower. The uncles usually picked a sister or brother of the deceased, but if there were no eligible sister or brother of a deceased, the next of kin or cousins of the deceased was chosen to become the mate of the widow or widower.

Close relatives or cousins were prohibited to marry. If a marriage between relatives occurred, the punishment given to the man was to cut off both ears or receive one hundred licks. The man was tied and laid on the ground or hung to a limb of a tree to receive the one hundred licks.