

HARJO, ALEX

SECOND INTERVIEW #12873

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UNITED TRIBES FOR PEACE

An interview of Alex Harjo, age 62,
Tokparfka town (tulwa), Okemah, Okla.

Billie Byrd, Journalist,
Indian-Pioneer History
2-3-38

The early Indians entered into and were forced to enter into and sign much treaty of different types, but when they were told that it was for one thing it would be an altogether different thing which had been signed and as time passed, each of them began to fear the talk of treaty or the signing of anything. So much hardships had been seen as a result of their leaders, upon whom they depended, signing away their lands.

In the years after the Civil War and when the different Indians in the Indian country were slowly adjusting their lives and living conditions -- they did not leave out the steps which would tend to keep peace and unrest in their midst. They looked forward to the time when they would always live in quiet, peace and harmony within their homes and with

the other tribes they had trouble with when the settlements were first made.

During the year of 1870, the steps for this sort of move were first laid down at a meeting of the Cherokees, Muskogee-Creeks, Seminoles and the Wa-sa-see tribes which were other tribes other than mentioned and included the western plains tribes. They met at Okmulgee, then the Muskogee-Creek council home, where they were to form the pact or the union to start in keeping a more lasting tie or friendship among the Indians.

Their leaders declared, "Our forefathers and their customs as well as their beliefs are almost extinguished; they have seen their heritage almost wiped in the dust of the earth but it is up to us, those of us who are met here to carry on in a country to which we have been brought."

They met in a council of different tribes but their foremost desire was to keep a union and feeling of peace and brotherhood among the Indians.

In the pact that was first made was their resolution to always keep a feeling of peace towards any and each member of the tribes present at the council.

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It was their stand not to repay any evil deeds, acts, thoughts or words with any who agreed and entered the pact. Any disagreement was certain to lead to unpleasant results.

They also resolved to keep and hold everything which the government had given to them. This was in reference to the lands and no attempt to make any moves away to distant places was to be considered.

Criminals and murderers were arrested and tried within the tribal country where the crime was committed. A criminal found in another tribal country outside of the tribal country where a crime was done, was turned over to the tribal chief of the country found in and he and his courts were free to have trial just as if it had been done in that country.

Any individual, member of another tribe not already in the pact, was free to become a member upon the approval of the chief and members of the tribe he belonged.

None of the members of the agreeing tribes were

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privileged and at liberty to carry and transport intoxicating drinks as they realized that drink could be a means to cause unfriendly feelings--- that was just what these resolutions were against. Any disregard of the laws was a trial within the tribal district or country where an offense is known and done.

It was up to the chiefs to call any extra meetings if anything urgent and important came up before them or was brought to their attention.

The peace pact was not limited to those who had signed but it was open to any other tribe wishing to become a member upon signing the pact.

When a meeting was held at Eufaula in 1886, a few additions were made but what there were were much similar to what had already been completed.

I don't know whether these things are still kept up and I don't remember when the matter was ever dropped but I remember only what I heard discussed regarding the move.