

LEWIS, STEWART

INTERVIEW

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Etta D. Mason
Investigator
November 11, 1937.

Interview with Stewart Lewis
Tushka, Oklahoma.

The Choctaw Indians now in Oklahoma originally lived in Mississippi and in the northern part of Alabama. Under the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, the Choctaws agreed to move west. They came to the southern part of Oklahoma, established a Republican form of Government, patterned after the Constitution of Mississippi, adopted a Constitution and elected a Governor, created a Legislature composed of a Senate and House of Representatives, elected a National Secretary, National Auditor and National Treasurer and set up a system of military training called the Light Horsemen, composed of one company of officers like other military organizations.

The Choctaw Indians had a Supreme Court with three Supreme Judges and a National Attorney, three District Courts with a District Judge for each, a District Attorney, a District Clerk and a County Court in each of the seventeen counties in the Choctaw Nation. Each County Court had a County Clerk, a Sheriff and deputies, a Superintendent of Public Instruction with five National

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schools, four for Indian children and one for the Choctaw Freedmen. The Governor was styled the Principal Chief and there were also three District Chiefs. The duty of these chiefs was to advise the district population as to the necessity of good Government.

The Choctaws were large slave owners, and when the country became stirred in 1861, and the war clouds were gathering, the Choctaws selected delegates to meet with delegates of the other four tribes in convention to determine what course to take in the coming war.

~~This convention was held at North Fork village on the north fork of the Canadian River in the Creek Nation on the 20th of July 1861.~~

General Albert Pike, representing the Confederate States of America, was at the convention. The Choctaw delegates were as follows; Robert M. Jones, Sampson Fulson, Forbus Leflore, George W. Harkins, Allen Wright, Alfred Wade, Coleman Cole, James Riley, Rufus Fulson, William King, William B. Pitchlynn, McGee King, John Turnbull and William Bryant. These commissioners pledged the Choctaw Nation as friendly to the Confederate States of America and espoused the Confederate cause in a treaty of alliance.

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At the session of the Choctaw Council, Robert M. Jones was chosen and commissioned as a commissioner to the Confederate Congress, then in session in Montgomery, Alabama, where he served with great credit to the Choctaw people until the close of the War.

The Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation commissioned Colonel Tandy Walker to raise a regiment of Choctaw troops. He raised five companies which were consolidated with five companies of white troops raised by Douglass H. Cooper, who was commissioned Brigadier-General by the Confederate States. Sampson Fulsom was next commissioned Colonel and also commissioned to raise a regiment of Choctaw troops which he did. This regiment became the First Choctaw Cavalry. Simpson Fulsom was next commissioned Colonel and commissioned to raise a Choctaw regiment. This regiment became the second Choctaw Cavalry.

Jackson F. McCurtain was next commissioned Lieutenant Colonel and he raised seven companies which became the second Choctaw Battalion of Choctaw Cavalry, making in all three full regiments and one extra company of Choctaw Cavalry. The Choctaw Nation furnished

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more soldiers for the Confederate Army than any of the Confederate States according to population.

The Choctaw Nation furnished only eleven soldiers to the Federal Army and one of them was Captain Nat Krebbs, whose brother, Edmond F. Krebbs, was a brave captain in the Confederate Army.

At the close of the Civil War the Choctaw Council either destroyed all the records pertaining to the War, or else those records were secreted then and have not yet been found. There remains only a few private records of the Choctaw Nation which have found their way into the war records at Richmond, Virginia.