

MILLER, SEBRON

INTERVIEW

6235

**246**

Jefferson Berryhill  
Field Worker  
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623  
247

Esparhecha War.

Interview with Sebron Miller  
Father-Sam Miller  
Mother-Cuple of the Canadian clan.

Mr. Sebron Miller was born two miles north and one mile west of Okmulgee, Oklahoma in Okmulgee County in the year 1863, and now lives four miles north on highway 75 and two and a half miles east, on route one of Okmulgee.

He is a full blood Creek Indian and seventy-four years old. He is a Tulsa Canadian clan of Coweta Oklahoma.

His father was Sam Miller. His mother's name was Cuple of the Tulsa Canadian clan. The dates of their birth and death being unknown.

His grandfather, Katev-Elle (Tiger's Leg) died in Georgia; also his grandmother, dates and ages unknown.

Mr. Sebron Miller was a soldier in the Esparhecha war. He says he was over thirty years old but had forgotten the exact age. He was a soldier on Samuel Checote's side.

Mr. Miller said the Esparhecha War was caused by the punishment of his niece. The main cause he said was the organizing of a group or a band to protect

-2-

the members. This band consisted of thirty or more members, according to clans or those who wished to be hostile. This went on as it grew in numbers till finally one time a big camp meeting or an Indian Mission was going on at Arbeka, southwest of Okemah, Oklahoma. Mr. Miller said he was there as many or most of all the Indians were gathered there. He said in the afternoon a preaching was going on, and while this preaching was in process, the muffled shots of guns were heard nearby or a short distance away, and in a few minutes a captain of the Light-horse by the name of Sam Wilson came up to the preaching on a horse and told of the battle that had taken place and the murder of his members. He told of being outnumbered and surprised, and said, although they fought with courage and bravery, they were all killed excepting him. As the captain, he had wandered just a little distance away, when he heard the shots of a gun all of a sudden, and he speeded back to his men, only to see them all killed as the incident had

-3-

occurred in a few minutes. In fact they had unknowingly ridden into an ambush. Seeing his Lighthorse members all killed, he came to the meeting to relate what had happened to Samuel Checote as he was then acting as chief of the tribe.

Mr. Miller said Esparkecha was a chief then, so Samuel Checote, chief of the other members, called for soldiers, and he made a talk concerning the incident and made a call for soldiers. So the big meeting was called off right then, and that was when Mr. Miller became a soldier under Samuel Checote. The soldiers were sent out in groups to punish Esparkecha and his members but Esparkecha was a man of knowledge and an intelligent person, knowing what was happening. He called all the roaming bands together; he became powerful; the soldiers under Checote went out to look for the murderous band, and it was this incident that made Mr. Miller a soldier. He said they went southeast of Okemah, Oklahoma about five miles looking for Esparkecha. It was a moonlit night, and they came to a creek running north and south. Just a

few yards away east from the creek was a branch or a deep slough. In that place were hiding Esparhecha's men, and all of a sudden they arose from their hiding place and began shooting. Mr. Miller said although they were out numbered, they were winning, when another band of Esparhecha's men, who had been scouting around nearby, came up. He said his band was greatly out numbered then and caught in between cross fires, so that seven of his members or soldiers were killed. The captain of Checote's soldiers which he served was an Indian named Tom Canard, father of Roley Canard, who is now chief of the Creeks. He said the battle lasted just about thirty minutes. Being outnumbered and seven having been killed, they had to retreat.

That was how the Esparhecha War began.

Mr. Miller relates that bands of these Indians had names such as Opv (owl), Kohak' Kuce (pin), Muskokees.

In this war he said men, women, and children took part or they were involved because they had to move around with the parents. They went everywhere the parents moved for protection. Esparhecha had over seven

hundred followers in all, including women and children.

In the Esparhecha war Mr. Miller says the guns used were rifles such as thirty-eights, forty-fours, and old muskets with square barrels. In this war the Indian medicine counted very much. In fact it was depended upon for protection. There are many different kinds of roots and herbs, but the main root that was very important was one called the red root in English; in Greek, it is called the Mek' ko Hoyanecv. This medicine was used for many different things in the war. The Indian, who before going to war doctored himself with the medicine, was not shot or killed. He told of one incident when a battle was being fought, one Indian, who was a medicine man, was in the midst of the battle. He was not wounded and after the enemy had retreated and taken to the trenches, this Indian or medicine man would come up out of the trench, get on a horse and side up to the enemy and shoot a man, turn around and go back to his soldiers. When he was spotted coming over for the kill as he always did kill a man every time he came over, they would shoot at him till he came and killed. He would be shot at till he had returned to his comrades and he would not

without a scratch. It was a common thing, this medicine magic.

Mr. Miller said that Esparhecha was a firm believer in the supernatural. He was a medicine man himself. He had as his councillors in the war, the medicine men, and many unbelievable things were performed by these men.

There were many others who were well acquainted with the medicine, even now there are many older Indians still living who are capable of curing any kind of sickness or diseases. Mr. Miller himself is looked upon as a medicine man, he is frequently visited by afflicted Indians for medicine. Even today some of the older Indians are feared. He is supposed to have learned the witchcraft from his forefathers.