

MILLER, SEERON

CREEK GOVERNMENT. 6356 228

INTERVIEW WITH SEBRON MILLER  
 Jefferson Berryhill, Field worker  
 June 16, 1937

Muskogee or Creek Government

Mr. Sebron Miller was born at two miles north and a mile west of Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Just half a mile north of the New Town Church, a mile from the highway 75. He is seventy-four years old and is a fullblood Creek Indian of Tulsa Canadian Clan at Coweta, Oklahoma. His father, Sam Miller, was a fullblood Creek, and his mother was also a fullblood. Her name was Cuple. The age and dates of his parents are unknown. His grandfather, Kátev-Elle (Tiger's Leg) died in Georgia, age and birth unknown.

The Creeks still had the old Indian Government as it had been handed down from generation to generation. They also had their courts. There were many chiefs who were prominent but of these some were not true to their people. One of these was William McIntosh. Esparnechar was a chief and Gpotaletocla. Samuel Checote was a chief.

Mr. Miller said the tribal courts had the authority to punish any person who had violated the law but had no right to punish the white people. When a white man had committed a crime, if he was caught by the Indians he was held until turned over to his race for punishment.

From the time of the removal of the Muskogees or Creeks which is the same as one, and their bringing from Georgia and Alabama, the Creeks again took up their age-old customs. They again organized the government. This organization of government and court laws was necessary as they had become pretty well fixed up in farms and homes. The town was the political unit in the organization. Each town, or *tvluv*, had its chief or micco who represented that group or clan in all the national councils, and who had the power or authority of making laws or treaties or transacting other business that had to be taken up with the government. If any transaction was to be done the chief or micco had to perform the duty.

It was a strangely organized government for they had no written laws as today, but although they had no written laws, the National Council enacted laws, which were well known and recognized by all the members of the tribe.

Some of the chiefs or miccos were stripped of the right to rule the members or tribes for some of them were not honest. One instance--William McIntosh proposed a measure in the National Council forbidding the further sale of any Creek lands to the United States

or to any others, and fixed a very strong penalty for the one who violated the law. This penalty was death for any chief or head man who violated the law. So this law was adopted by the Council and strange as it may seem, William McIntosh violated the law. His authority was taken from him, the treaty he made was declared void, and he was declared guilty under the law he himself had made. So a party of soldiers were sent out to execute him. These soldiers were sent out under leader or authority of Opothleyahola and they came to the McIntosh home and killed his men, who had also signed the treaty; his home was set on fire; and finally he came out and was shot dead.

As well as the National Council, they had courts for the law violators. The laws were few but strict and there were severe penalties. For that reason, there were not very many criminals or desperadoes, Mr. Miller said. When there was one, they were men who really were bad. He said the criminals of today are softies.

These government and tribal laws were in progress until they were abolished, not very many moons ago. Many were reluctant toward the abolition of the well respected Muskogee Creek Government.