

EDWARDS AND WELCH.

INTERVIEW.

13764

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma
EDWARDS AND WELCH INTERVIEW #13764

Field worker's name Gomer Gower

This report made on (date) April 28, 1938

This legend was
secured from (name) John War Edwards and William Welch

Address Shady Point, Oklahoma

This person is (male or female) ☒ White, ☒ Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story Outstanding patriotism of

Jacob Jackson

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached 6

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Gomer Gower
Investigator
April 28, 1938.

Interview with John War Edwards
and William Welch
Shady Point, Oklahoma.

Jacob B. Jackson deserves an honored place in the history of the Choctaw people for the reason that he went to his grave with a broken heart when his hopes that, by some means, the terms of the treaty of 1866, in which it was provided that tribal existence be brought to an end, might be at least modified, were met with disappointment.

Little can be learned of his early childhood beyond the fact that through the assistance of Peter Folsom, he was sent at tribal expense to the Roanoke College at Salem, Virginia, where he succeeded in acquiring a good education.

Upon his return from that school to the Choctaw Nation, he established a home at a point about two miles west of Double Springs - now Shady Point - and not far distant from the home of his benefactor, Peter Folsom, where he resided until his death which occurred in May, 1909.

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He served his Tribe as Treasurer for several years. It is said of him that on occasions when his duties at the capitol permitted, he would return to his home and visit the churches and schools in the community and advise the people about what was taking place at the capitol. He spoke English fluently and often interpreted sermons delivered in the Choctaw language for the edification of the white attendants at religious services. Altogether, he was a man who was held in the highest esteem by all who knew him.

Like many others, of his time, he had come to believe that it was not the intention of the Federal Government to actually insist upon the division of the land and the ending of tribal existence, but that those provisions of the treaty of 1886 were to hold as an ever present threat over the tribes to secure absolute allegiance to the Federal Government in the event another Civil War was threatened. However, in the late eighteen-eighties, much pressure was brought to bear upon the Federal authorities to open up the Ceded Lands to settlers.

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Powerful organizations were formed for the purpose of bringing influences to bear upon the members of Congress to enact laws whereby these lands could be opened for settlement. Adventurous men headed these organizations; men who through a glib tongue could incite the unwary into believing that ^{by} withholding entry to the lands owned by the Indians from them, they were being grossly wronged.

Then, like a clap of thunder out of a clear sky, the opening of the Cherokee Strip occurred in 1889. That opening sounded the death knell of the communal ownership of the land and that of tribal existence.

Seeing in that move upon the part of the Government a possibility of further and more disastrous invasion of their rights, those of the Choctaws, who desired to resist all efforts of the Government to destroy their National existence, banded themselves together in a party which was called the National Party. Jacob Jackson became the head of this party and in 1890 entered the lists against Wilson Jones, the candidate of the party which was called

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the Progressive Party, for the office of Principal Chief. The election, right or wrong, resulted in Jones being declared the winner. In the campaign preceding the election a possible deadly battle between the contending forces, all armed to the teeth, was narrowly averted.

After the election of his opponent, Wilson Jones, Jackson rightly feared that his beloved Choctaw Republic would soon pass into oblivion. He gathered about him some five hundred Choctaws who had signified their willingness to follow him to Mexico, where, it was hoped, a concession of land could be obtained from that Government and a new Choctaw Republic established. However, negotiations with the Mexican Government for a grant of land ended in failure. The undertaking, therefore, was dropped and by the force of the judgment of superior numbers Jackson and his followers succumbed to the inevitable and became disgusted observers of the sad and destruction of that which they held dearer than life; the preservation of their tribal autonomy.

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As before stated, Jackson's home was at a point about two miles west of Shady Point and in an area which, according to surveys made under the direction of the Dawes Commission, was "Segregated Land". The surveyors had failed to note that a strip barren of coal or merchantable timber lay between the Cavanal Mountain and Brazil Creek, upon which strip of land Jackson's home was located. Jackson was desirous of filing on the land surrounding his home but was prohibited from doing so for some time due to its segregation. He very properly took his problem to the Commission for further consideration. The Commission, after investigation, found that cause for segregation of the land upon which Jackson wished to file did not exist and for that reason released it from the restriction which segregation placed upon it. Due to that action, lands which had been occupied by various other citizens in the area were also liberated from the restriction.

He withdrew from active political life after his defeat for the office of Principal Chief by Wilson Jones

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in 1890 and after his failure to secure a grant of land in the Republic of Mexico, where he hoped to establish a home for the patriotic Choctaws, who so reluctantly gave up their own government in the Indian Territory, and settled down to a quiet home life brooding over the loss his tribe had suffered.

At his death in 1909, his surviving relatives, who had by that time become very much scattered, feared that if he was buried at the home, as was the custom of the Choctaws, the property, in time, would fall into the hands of others and his grave be desecrated. For that reason he was laid to rest in the cemetery at Shady Point.