

COLL. PRTE.

INDIAN CARRIAGE LAWS

13124

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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PETE W. - CHOCTAW MARRIAGE LAWS.

13124

Field worker's name Pete W. Cole.
This report made on (date) March 3, 1938

This legend was secured from (name) _____

Address _____

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

If Indian, give tribe _____

Origin and history of legend or story Laws of the Choctaws

~~regulating the marriage of white men to the Choctaw women.~~

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

Cole, Peter W. - Investigator
 Indian Pioneer History-9-14
 March 3 1938

LAW OF THE CHOCTAW
 Regulating
 Marriage of white men to the Choctaw women.

In a ball game especially the national game the Indians all took much pride. To it was war or hunting they also all took interest. In war the Indians were required to pass through many hardships and sufferings that were required to receive inflictions of tortures on their naked bodies to see how long they could stand before making an outward manifestation of suffering. Those who passed this test were regarded as brave and worthy of praise.

To plunge into deep water and dive 1000 times in one minute when the cold weather was at its worst on frost mornings, was to toughen the brave where he could stand severe punishment. Lectures on the subject of bravery were taught by the bravest of men who usually was their headman. The braves became expert in the use of bows and arrows and of course, would not miss to kill a deer, turkey or any object that they cared to shoot at the distance of fifty and seventy-five yards.

Girls were trained to perform various kinds of domestic employment, as well as to work in the field, which was but a small patch.

When two youngsters decided to get married, relatives of each would get together and have a general round-table discussion as to whether or not right should be granted for the girl to become the wife of the applicant. Usually the first and most important question asked about the young "bridegroom to be" was whether or not he was able to take care of his wife. His bravery, hunting and ball playing, his sincerity and truth were discussed, also. Similar questions were asked of the "bride to be" and, if all arrangements made were satisfactory, it was left up to the girl to accept or reject the boy, then when the young beau went to see his "Fair One", he did not get to talk to her until later. If plans worked out, arrangements were made for the wedding.

Such were the traditions of the Choctaw Indians until the white people began to swarm into the Indian country and intermarry with them, which the elder Indians opposed very strongly. However, there was not anything they could do, since there was no law against it.

In the year 1884 an act relative to a white man marrying an Indian woman, or white woman marrying an Indian man was passed. The contents of this law were: Any white man or citizen of the United States or of any foreign government desiring to marry a Choctaw woman, citizen of the Choctaw Nation, be required to obtain a license for the same. Each man or person applying for a license must have a certificate signed by at least ten respectable Choctaw citizens by blood and who have known him for at least twelve months, showing that he was a man of good moral character. One of the provisions in the law was that should any man or woman, a citizen of the United States or of any foreign country become a citizen of the Choctaw Nation by intermarriage and be left a widow or widower, they should continue to enjoy the rights of citizenship unless remarried to a white man or woman, in which case he or she no longer had any right or claim in the Indian Government.

In the early days a white man came into the Choctaw country and married a Choctaw girl and in the course of time a child was born. Soon after the arrival of the little stranger, the first such child in the Choctaw Nation, a council was called to consider the propriety of permitting

white men to marry the Choctaw women. It was argued that if this was to be permitted, the half-breeds would become more numerous than the full-bloods and eventually destroy their national characteristics. They determined to stop all future marriages between the Choctaws and the whites and at once ordered the white husband to leave and the child killed. The mother of the child, hearing of the plan, hid the child and when the committee arrived to see out the order they failed to find it and made a report that the Great Spirit had taken it away. The mother kept it concealed for a few weeks then secretly brought it back home one night and told her friends that the Great Spirit had brought it back and placed it by her side during the night. The executioner finally decided that the child might live. The boy was afterwards regarded as being under a special care of the Great Spirit and became a Chief of the Choctaw Nation, and the law was later repealed.