

ROSS, ELIZABETH

ARTICLES.

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CHEROKEE SEMINARIES, WAR TIME.

PROPERTY COLLECTED.

The Cherokee National seminaries were left without caretakers during the period of the Civil War, and in consequence much of the furnishings was carried away. Bedsteads, chairs, tables, and other articles were taken to various sections, long distances away in many instances. Many of those appropriating property which belonged to the Cherokee Nation were Cherokee citizens. They seemed to have thought that because the "nation" owned the property, they, as citizens, had the right to take possession of whatever they desired.

Nothing could be done while the conflict prevailed to preserve the seminaries' property, for the Cherokee government was disrupted to ^a large extent during several years. But at the close of the war, when measures were adopted for reestablishing the government, the reopening of the two seminaries received consideration. As a result of the years of conflict the Cherokee National funds were badly depleted and it was not until a number of years had elapsed that the high schools were reopened. But as early as 1865

an effort was made to find and collect stolen property.

An act was passed authorizing the principal chief to have the property of the seminary buildings taken care of. In this act it was said that the property belonging to the Male and Female Seminaries, which has been taken from said buildings "be collected together", and the principal chief was directed to appoint two persons whose duty was to ascertain where and by whom such property was held, the same to be collected wherever found.

It was further enacted that when the property, or as much as could be found, had been collected, the persons appointed as collectors should report to the principal chief the description and number of articles found. The property was then to be placed in the care of some responsible person or persons for safe keeping until the seminaries were reopened, or until some further disposition was made of the property by the National Council. Those employed to collect the property received compensation from the Cherokee National treasury.

Lewis Downing, assistant principal chief in 1865,

signed the act of the National Council, as acting principal chief. The act was approved and signed at Tahlequah, July 7, 1865.

Much of the property, of course, was not found. Some, no doubt, had been carried to distant points outside the limits of the Cherokee Nation, and in the nation some was well hidden.

During the period of the war homeless people found shelter at intervals in the seminary buildings, as did some of the plundering bands of men who rode about the hills and prairies, but during the greater portion of the time the buildings stood vacant.

Authority: General recollections of old citizens. Laws of the Cherokee Nation. The late J. R. Price, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, as to vacant buildings.