

ROSS, ELIZABETH

ORIGIN OF GREENLEAF

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255

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7403

Elizabeth Ross, Interviewer
Indian - Pioneer History
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Origin of Greenleaf

In the year 1818 the Western Cherokees living down in Arkansas Territory were so harassed by the Osages that the necessity for decisively defeating the latter in battle was realized. The western group was not possessed of sufficient fighting men with which to successfully contend with the Osages. Consequently messengers were sent to the eastern Cherokees with request that aid be furnished. The authorities of the eastern nation acceded to the call for assistance, and soon a strong war party, composed of several hundred well-equipped and mounted men, started on its way west.

Old Cherokees in bygone years recalled the names bestowed upon places of encampment while the party steadily rode toward the western nation. There were several places where out-of-the-ordinary episodes occurred, designated by Cherokee names.

Upon reaching the western Cherokee Nation the combined forces of both nations were placed in command of a noted individual who has been referred

ROSS, ELIZABETH. ORIGIN OF GRE NLEAF. 7403

2

to as William Dutch, Captain Dutch, or Old Dutch. This early day Cherokee was the last War Chief to serve as such among the people of his nation.

The Osages were seen several times as the Cherokee war party made its way in a north-westerly direction from the country of the western group, but invariably the Osages gave ground and declined to fight. At length when the war party was making its way across the summit of a big hill several scouts rode in at high speed with the report that the Osages were not far in front and evidently making ready for battle. Captain Dutch immediately ordered his men to hold themselves in readiness for action and all complied, except that one warrior suddenly fell to the ground and exhibited extreme illness. The medicine man, it seems, was summoned and succeeded to some extent in relieving the distress of the prone warrior. Then the scouts galloped up again with the report that the Osages were rapidly retiring. The intelligence was most welcome to the sick man who soon sat up, arose, and was able to ride onward with the other members of the war party. The warriors indulged in

ROSS, ELIZABETH. ORIGIN OF GREENLEAF.

7403

3

much laughter at the expense of the man who had fallen, so suddenly ill. Of him it had been ascertained that when the prospect of battle appeared near at hand he had energetically chewed tobacco, exhibiting nervousness, finally taking another chew of the weed. The tobacco had been raised in a "patch" back in the old nation, but was not of the highest grade, having been cured imperfectly, and was of a greenish hue, a fair specimen of long green tobacco, as the variety has long been designated. In chewing the leaf tobacco the warrior had swallowed a quantity of the juice and consequently suffered prostrating illness.

In speaking of the incident the men of the war party referred to the scene of the nervous warrior's illness as the place where the green leaf (tobacco) made him sick. In course of time the big hill, on the summit of which the warrior became ill, became spoken of simply as Greenleaf Mountain, a name which has been retained to the present time, and is also applied to the watercourse known as Greenleaf Creek.

Among the members of the Cherokee war party

ROSS, ELIZABETH. ORIGIN OF GREENLEAF. 7403

4

from the Cherokee Nation east of the Mississippi River, was Archibald Campbell, who after the removal west of the eastern Cherokees in 1838, lived in the Park Hill locality, and served as member and speaker of the national council, and as Assistant Principal Chief.

Authority: The incident was related by Archibald Campbell; the facts were preserved and related in later years by Reverend W. A. Duncan; born 1823, died 1907, private secretary for Chief John Ross in 1844, personally acquainted with Campbell.