

**This History is directly from the
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GEORGE WASHINGTON CHOATE

By Wanda L. Clark

He was a Choctaw statesman, lawman & soldier in the Civil War on the side of the Confederacy. To his grandson, Ben Choate, Sr., who presently lives in McAlester, he was, and is a hero. Orphaned as a young man, Ben Sr. was, in essence, reared by his grandfather, who took his son's widow and her children into his home. Young Ben rode out to look at cattle & the land with his grandfather often, and on those trips learned a lot of Choctaw history, a lot of family history, and a lot of philosophy of life which still sustains him.

George Washington Choate was born in October 1840, in Attala County, Mississippi, southwest of the town of Kosciusko, on the road to Yazoo City. "He was the son of James C. Choate, half Choctaw, his mother being of the Ward family." (1) On his father's side he belonged to the OK-Ia-fa-Iay-a clan. James C. Choate's father was a white man who came into Mississippi and married a full-blood Choctaw. The older Choate, James C.'s father's mother was a Crockett. It was with James C.'s father's marriage to a member of the Choctaw tribe that the Choctaw heritage began.

James C. Choate was born ca 1806, he had three known wives, two were sisters, and one their cousin. George Washington's mother was a young girl when James C. married her, and she died in childbirth when George was born. The 1850 Atalla Co., MS Federal Census shows the following:

CHOATE,	James C.	46
	Winnie	48 wife
	Samuel	16
	David C.	18
	James S.	15
	Sarah M.	12
	George Washington	9
	William W.	7
	John A	4
	Allen G.	21

James C. Choate owned slaves and a plantation, and ran an inn on the Natchez Trace. The family did not come to Indian Territory with the Removal. Instead James C. with his two remaining wives and some of his children came to Indian Territory (2) in 1854 settling on the land that later became a community bearing their name: Choate Prairie, near the present community of Indianola, Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. It is known that Samuel, William & John came to the territory as did others of their siblings. Christopher Columbus Choate, a Mason, and well known in McAlester, was a son of Samuel Choate, George Washington's brother.

Just shortly before the war, James C. Choate was shot in the back by an unknown ambusher. He was sitting under a shade tree in his front yard. For years the family kept the chair marked with the bullet. He is buried in the now abandoned old Choate cemetery, on the land he occupied.

More than one of George Washington's brothers was killed during the Civil War. At the outbreak of the War Between the States, G. W. as he was most often called, enlisted in Choctaw-Chicksaw Mounted Rifle Command under Gen. Douglas Hancock Cooper. Gen. Cooper's family had been neighbors of Confederate President Jefferson Davis's family, and Davis had ordered him to the Indian Nation to organize the mounted rifles. He was stationed at Fort Washita.

G.W. was injured in the battle at Perryville, Indian Territory and was evacuated to the hospital at Fort Washita southeast of present day Tishomingo. There he was nursed by Eliza Wade, who subsequently became his wife. Eliza Wade was the daughter of Simon Wade, and his wife Jinsey. Descendants say Jinsey was a Beams. Traditionally, Simon was a full-blood Choctaw of the Mississippi Wade family and Jinsey was a full-blood Chickasaw. Her parentage has not yet been determined. So far, only two children of Simon Wade have been determined.

Jane F., who was born 22 October 1823, probably in Mississippi before the Removal. She married George Perkins, possibly in Blue County, Choctaw Nation, and they moved to Choate Prairie, Tobucksy County, and Indian Territory. Since Jinsey's last known child was born in 1864, it would appear that Jane F., may have been a child of Simon Wade's by another wife, but this has yet to be determined. George & Jane F. Perkins son, Hughie and their daughter Louisa are known to have moved to Tobucksy County. The town of Indianola is on part of Hugh Perkins allotment. Louisa was the wife of Alexander Hamilton Sr., well known Indianola land owner and Choctaw lawman. Jane F. died 16 January 1893 and is buried at the Choate Prairie Cemetery.

Simon Wade apparently predeceased Jinsey, and she married _____ later shortened to Martin. He was killed a short time before Jinsey gave birth to their daughter, Caroline II Carrie II. Carrie Martin was born 20 April 1864, and died 25 June 1957. She is buried at Madill, OK. She married _____ by whom she had some children. Her second husband was Jeff Arbuckle b. 28 October 1862 in North Texas, and died 23 May 1913, in Ardmore, OK and is buried in Madill. He was the Vice President of the Madill National Bank, and help found it. A granddaughter, Mrs. Finas Sandlin lives in McAlester, and another granddaughter, Almeda Reid still lives in Madill. Eliza Wade Choate took young Carrie, her half-sister into her home after the death of Jinsey. The Arbuckles at one time lived at Overbrook, Love Co., OK.

Eliza Wade, daughter of Simon and Jinsey, was born in February 1839, near Talihina, Wade County, Choctaw Nation, and Indian Territory. She, with at least one of her sisters was attending Bloomfield Academy below Durant, prior to the Civil War. When the war came, she went to Fort Washita to be a nurse to the wounded. George Washington Choate brought his new bride to Tobucksy County, where he built their first home at Choate Prairie. The log house now stands on the Bynum property in Indianola, Oklahoma as a museum and tribute to the life and times of the men who built it. Eliza was one of the original founders & members of the Choate Prairie Baptist Church, one of the oldest, continuous churches in the county. (3)

Only two children of this marriage appear to have survived, William Frederick Choate, and Alice Jane Choate, as they are listed by G.W. in a turn of the century interview as his only surviving children by Eliza Wade. The 1896 census shows Abner Morris, 12, and Frances King, 10, as grandchildren living in his household. These are apparently children, possibly related in some way, but not grandchildren, that the Choates took into their home and helped rear and educate. The 1900 census shows the family as having 10 children born and 8 living. The 1910 census shows 8 born and none living. It appears possible that one of the solutions to this seaming contradiction is that the census taker reversed the 1900 record and of 10 children only the two G.W. reported as surviving did so. Both the surviving children had died by the time the 1910 census was taken.

Upon his return from the Civil War, G. W. Choate farmed & raised livestock. In 1876 Judge Edmond Krebs asked him to become Sheriff, and he was elected without opposition as Tobucksy County sheriff, and was re-elected to that post again in 1882. He was a Tobucksy county judge, and in 1890 he was chosen to be a member of the house of the Choctaw Legislature from Tobucksy County, at the Capitol in Tuskahoma.

He was a Choctaw Nation senator, and remained in that position until statehood. Prior to being a Senator, he was presiding Judge of the Choctaw Nation Supreme Court.

On their many horseback forays around Choate Prairie, he told his young grandson Ben, (son of William Frederick), stories of the Choctaw Nation back in Mississippi and in Indian Territory. He told him how Whitefield, OK was once named Mushalatubbee for the Choctaw Chief who was one of the signers of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. He told him of the time that the King Ranch of Texas fame was herding about 2000 head of cattle on a cattle drive to the north. The South Canadian River was swollen and the herd could not cross. As a result they were foraging in the area and damaging local crops & fences. A shooting scrape ensued on the flat between the present towns of Indianola & Canadian. The Choctaw Nation was authorized by its laws to confiscate cattle under these circumstances and G.W. went out to implement that law. He was riding a Mexican type saddle, with a big horn, which probably saved his life for a soft lead slug hit the saddle horn, then hit G.W. on the right side of the navel, injuring, but not killing him.

Two or three of the King Ranch men were killed and the group went home without their cattle, taking the bodies of their dead with them, among them a young man reputed to be engaged to one of the King girls. One of the reasons Judge Krebs had encouraged Choate to run for sheriff was to try to put a stop to the cattle herds going through the Choctaw Nation because they resulted in so much damage.

While he was County Judge, he received word that Annhauser Busch had a carload of beer that was to come to the Choctaw Nation at Krebs. The Choctaw Nation was, by its constitution adopted in 1834, dry, and it remained so until statehood in 1907. Choate ordered the then Sheriff Joe Nale to confiscate the beer, but he did not exercise that authority, so G. W. deputized a Choctaw lawyer, Napoleon Bonaparte Ainsworth, known as "Dime" to empty the beer, which he did.

When statehood came, George Washington Choate was in line for the next Governorship of the Choctaw Nation. He was a popular and well-liked man. His home was open to anyone who needed help and he took in several homeless children, some related to him and some not and helped rear and educate them. In 1894, he owned 400 acres of land in cultivation alone, 250 head of stock cattle and 100 horses. His place contained good-sized orchards.

His surviving son, William Frederick Choate was born 12 February 1870 at Choate Prairie. He married on 22 September 1891, to Mary Elizabeth Piepgras, who was born in Muscatine, Iowa and had come to the Choctaw Nation from Albany, N.Y. to teach in the Baptist Choctaw School, which was in the northwest part of McAlester. Only two of their children survive: Ben Sr., whose son Ben Jr. is an attorney in Muskogee; his son Ben III is a doctor on the medical staff of the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. William Frederick & Mary Elizabeth's daughter Mary Elizabeth Poorman, lives in New Mexico. She was a teacher and was in the first enlistees in the WACs, and retired as a Major.

G. W. & Eliza's only surviving daughter Alice Jane, born at Choate Prairie on 11 June 1873. She married G. Wallace York. She died 11 March 1902, and is buried at Choate Prairie as is her husband who was born in 1868, and died in 1947. The full genealogical record on descendants of George Washington Choate is being compiled by Mrs. Ben Choate Jr.

George Washington Choate died in a McAlester, OK hospital as a result of pneumonia, which he developed in the hospital where he was being treated a broken leg received when one of his horses kicked him. He is buried in the cemetery which bears his name, a few miles from Indianola, OK in what is now Pittsburg County.

Footnote (1) -- This is a direct quote from "Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory", in an 1894 article on G. W. Choate. It is difficult, from the construction of the sentence to tell if it was James C. Choate or George Washington Choate, his son, whose mother was of the Ward family.

Footnote (2) -- Polygamy was legal among the Choctaw Tribes. It was an imminently practical practice since the wives were usually related, and often widows of brothers. It prevented many of the otherwise single or widowed women from having no one to care for them in a time when women remained in the home.

Footnote (3) -- This church is still in use and is the oldest continuous Church in Tobucksy County, now Pittsburg Co., Oklahoma.

SOURCES

Leaders & Leading Men of the Indian Territory, published 1894, p. 201, G.W.Choate.

Interviews with Ben Choate, Sr., McAlester, OK, grandson of George Washington Choate.

Interviews with Ben Choate, Jr., Muskogee, OK, family genealogist.

Interviews with Almeda Reid, Madill, OK, granddaughter of Caroline Martin Boren Arbuckle.

Interviews with Jeff Sandlin, McAlester, OK, granddaughter of Caroline Martin Boren Arbuckle.

Obituary of Amy Sue Choate Ahn, McAlester News Capitol, McAlester, OK, 23 Dec. 1983.

1855 Tobukey Co., Choctaw Nation Indian Territory Census:

41. SHOAT (CHOATE) CHAMIS (JAMES)

ALIN (ALLEN)

WASH (GEORGE WASHINGTON)

WILLIAM

CHON (JOHN)

LILLIAN (1) (LYDIA) md. a PEARSON

Note: Eliza Wade Choate was somehow related to the Cheadle family.

NOTE by ICW-- I had to retype this article in order to get it into this Newsletter and I did proof read, but sure hope that I have not goofed. It was sent to me by Jackye Choate and was very well typed on six pages and double spaced so if any one would like a copy of that I could copy it or am sure Jackye would do so.

Will add this about JAMES C. CHOATE: Jackye states "I know that MOSES, ISAAC & DAVID CHOATE went to Mississippi, so I figure that one of them is the father of JAMES C. He is supposed to have been born in Alabama, probably near the line of MS or TN. with his father going back and forth between these states. My theory that DAVID is his father is pure guess-work, based on ages, census records, and the fact that JAMES C. named his first son DAVID."

I am inclined to agree with Jackye that DAVID is probably the father of JAMES C. In fact the DAVID CHOATE (b. 1775-1776) that married JUDITH could be the father because the first son that we have record of for him is JESSE who was born 1810 or 1822 depending on which census record we can trust. At any rate in 1810 DAVID would have been 35 years old so could certainly have had children before JESSE.

WE WELCOME ANY IDEAS OR NEW INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT...