

JUL 4 1982

Choctaws First To Trade Land

The first of the civilized tribes of Indians to trade part of their land for holdings in the Indian Territory were the Choctaws, who live in Alabama and central and southern Mississippi.

In the fall of 1820, Gen. Andrew Jackson and Gen. Thomas Hinds met the Choctaw chiefs at Doak's Stand on the Natchez Trace. Jackson arrived dressed in the uniform of his high position, made a speech to the Choctaws saying he wished to trade a vast and rich domain in Indian Territory for a "slip of land" the Choctaws owned.

The reply to Jackson's speech was given by Pushmataha, an honored chief and one of the shrewdest Indian leaders of his time. He was a great hunter and warrior who had become chief because of his record. He was held in high regard by the whites, also, as he had led a force of 500 warriors in the War of 1812 and was with Jackson during a campaign in Florida. He had hunted and fought throughout the west, so he knew the country that was being offered to the Choctaws in exchange for their Mississippi land.

Chief Pushmataha corrected Jackson in some of his statements about the region offered in Indian Territory and carefully made it secure for his people. Thus, the Choctaws obtained their claim to all of southern Oklahoma lying between the Canadian and Red Rivers and from the Arkansas boundary to the 100th meridian on the west.

Pushmataha died in Washington, D.C., in 1824 and was buried in the congressional cemetery with high military honors. One of the largest counties in Oklahoma bears his name.