



OKLAHOMA
TERRITORY

TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of
History
Before
Statehood

JUL 16 1982

War, Lies Led To Indians' Loss

Throughout the summer of 1867 a cruel war raged upon the plains. Hundreds of lives were lost among the settlers, soldiers and Indians. Emigrants and traders on the overland trails were attacked, and horrible deaths followed. Millions of dollars of property was destroyed.

The Indians' country was being taken away from them, for the government's promises had been broken and at times the Indians had been deceived. They hated the white people and looked down upon them as an inferior race who lived by lying.

In the fall of 1867, the Indians, lacking food and other necessities, were persuaded to gather at a peace council in the valley of the Medicine Lodge river in southern Kansas. More than 7,000 Indians gathered in a sullen mood.

The government sent its ablest men, with plenty of food and supplies for the Indians. After several days of speech-making, chiefs of the tribes represented signed new treaties.

The speech of the great Kiowa chief, Satanta, was reported by Henry M. Stanley, the African explorer, as closing with: "A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up the river I see a camp of soldiers, and they are cutting my wood down and killing buffalo. I don't like that, and when I see it my heart feels like bursting with sorrow. I have spoken."

Government commissioners responded with cruel realism. The buffalo would be killed out and the Indians must settle down to farming.