

The Delaware or Lenape

by
Deborah Nichols

When the Delaware moved to their new homes in Kansas in 1829, they unwittingly placed themselves at the crossroads of United States western development and history for the next forty years. At this crossroads, they were drawn into the major historic movements of the region: the fur trade, western exploration and mapping, the Santa Fe trade, westward migration along the Oregon and other emigrant trails, the Mexican War, the Plains Indian Wars, pre-Civil War Bleeding Kansas, the Civil War, and construction of the transcontinental railroad systems.

The Delaware Nation residing in Kansas was the main body of descendants of the eastern people who originally occupied the coastal areas of New Jersey, northern Delaware, eastern Pennsylvania, and southeastern New York. They were an Algonquian people, among the first native people to encounter European settlers over two centuries before. During that time, their nation endured repeated removals, taking them further westward with each move. Members of the tribe migrated through Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas, and Texas. Other Delaware and related groups migrated to Wisconsin and to Ontario, Canada. One group of Delaware lived in Texas, and later removed to the Indian Territory. Travel between this group and the tribe in Kansas was relatively common, for purposes of visiting family members and for work as army scouts or interpreters to other tribes.

During the 1830's and 1840's, the Delaware continued to earn money in the fur trade, an occupation they had practiced for several generations. Men such as **Black Beaver**, **Jim**

Swannuck, **Jim Dickey**, "**Big Nigger**" (a name bestowed by mountain men, later changed to **Big Nicholas**), **Little Beaver**, **Jim Simon** (**Delaware Jim**), **Ben Simon**, and others were well known in the fur trade. Records of the period show that they ranged from Montana to Taos, New Mexico and further west.

Following the decline in the fur trade during the 1840's, Delaware men sought other sources of employment. Around 1849-1850, the enterprising Simon brothers (Jim and Ben) engaged in an interesting trading practice in Montana along the emigrant road to California and Oregon. During the summer, they traded for tired and undernourished cattle from the emigrants on the trail. They wintered these cattle in one of the nearby valleys, and traded them to the Flathead Indians for horses. The next spring, they exchanged these horses to the emigrants for more cattle and repeated the process.¹

Delawares who previously worked in the Rocky Mountain fur trade used their knowledge and experience in that area to work as Army scouts, guides for exploring and mapping expeditions, and guides for wagon trains. During the fall and winter of 1837-38, a number of Delaware served with **Colonel Zachary Taylor** in the second Seminole War, led by their own Capt. Moses and **Capt. Swannuck** (**Swannuck** has many spelling variations, such as **Suwaunock**, **Swanic**, and **Swanock**).² Twelve Delaware, including Jim Swannuck and James Secondine, were serving as scouts and hunters for **John C. Fremont** in 1846 when the **Bear Flag Rebellion** erupted in California. They were promptly signed into the American military forces.³ **Black Beaver** served in the Mexican War as captain of his own company of Delaware and Shawnee Indians, **Beaver's Spy Company** -- Indian -- Texas Mounted Volunteers.⁴

James Ketchum, who was also a Methodist minister, worked occasionally as a hunter and scout. In the summer of 1846, he was employed with a group of Delaware and Shawnee who acted as an advance spying and scouting party for

Colonel S. W. Kearney's expedition to gain U.S. Control of New Mexico.⁵ Also included were James' brother, **Lewis Ketchum**, and **John Marshall**, the half Delaware son of trader **William Marshall**. **John Marshall** was a brother of **Anna Marshall Grinter**, the wife of **Moses Grinter**. Grinter ran a ferry at the Delaware or Military Crossing, and later operated a trading post nearby, which is now a Kansas historic site. Throughout the Plains Indian Wars, Delaware men such as **Capt. Falleaf**, **John Conner**, **Jim Shaw**, **James Ketchum**, **Joseph Armstrong**, **John Sarcoxie** and **Ben Love** were employed as army scouts and hunters.

Of the Delaware who served in the Civil War, **Capt. Falleaf** was one of the most notable figures, guiding his troops to southwestern Missouri to aid **John Fremont** and leading them in the First Federal Indian Expedition to Indian Territory. As part of two brigades engaged in the expedition, Falleaf commanded Company D of the Second Indian Home Guards, Kansas Infantry.⁶ This was a company of 86 Delaware Indians, who furnished their own horses. **Colonel John Ritchie** was the regimental commander.

The purpose of the Indian Expedition in the summer of 1862 was to regain at least a portion of Indian Territory from Confederate forces. Among the apparent goals were to retake military control of Fort Gibson; ascertain if Cherokee Chief **John Ross** was actually pro-Union and possibly help him escape from the Confederate-held Cherokee capitol of Tahlequah; and to allow pro-Union Indian troops who were refugees in Kansas to participate in reclaiming their homes and returning their families to the Indian Territory. From the record of events for **Company D, Second Indian Home Guards** for July and the first week of August, 1862, the following report is made and signed by **Capt. Falleaf**:

After mustering June 30, 1862 at Honey Creek, we left there and arrived at Round Grove the same day. We started July 2 & spent the 4th at Cabin Creek. **Col. Ritchie** left us here July 6, [to go to] Fort Scott with prisoners. We left there &

with easy marches arrived at camp on Grand River and joined Col. Solomon's and Weer's Brigades. July 19, the white troops all left us & the Indian regiments were left alone, and at the same time Cos. C and D were holding Fort Gibson & continued to do so until the 21st. Owing to the demoralizing effects of the retreat of the white troops, the Indians deserted us and we were obliged to fall back. July 27 we had an engagement with the enemy at Talequa[sic] & co. D distinguished themselves. Aug. 5 we arrived at Baxter Springs. Fall X Leaf Capt. his mark⁷

Falleaf later referred to the July 27 battle at Bayou Bernard, near Tahlequah and Fort Gibson, in a letter attempting to get the pay owed to Delaware troops:

In the summer of 1862 I went out under **Colonel Ritchie**, of Topeka, Kans. and had a fight near Fort Gibson; we saw the enemy, the Choctaw Indians, the halfbreed, we play ball with them, 50 we laid on the ground, 60 we took prisoners, even the Choctaw general; him I took myself alone; he was a big secesh [secessionist]; 100 Union men he had killed. I brought him to the [Loyalist] Cherokees; they killed him; they gave him no time to live.⁸

Official reports listed thirty-two Confederate dead, including **Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas F. Taylor** and **Captain Hicks** of Stand Watie's Cherokee regiment, and two captains of a Choctaw regiment.⁹ Falleaf returned to the Delaware reserve soon afterward on a medical leave. His men, left without their leader, also returned home.

When the ethnologist **Lewis Henry Morgan** visited the Delaware Reserve in 1859, he noted that most of the Delaware women present at payment day were wearing their best finery, which consisted of long dresses of brightly colored muslin or (sometimes black) silk.¹⁰ They carried colorful, fringed silk shawls, and tied a silk handkerchief around their head. He observed that many of the men wore ornamented leggings, a breech cloth, a vest or shirt, and a frock coat. In

Delaware lands were sold through treaties in 1854, 1860, 1861, and 1866. In addition to treaties with the federal government, the tribe sold land to the Wyandot Tribe in 1843, and to the Christian Indians in 1854.²² In 1867, the Delaware Tribe signed a treaty with the Cherokee Nation for lands and legal rights in that nation in the Indian Territory. By the summer of 1868, every Delaware who had chosen to retain his or her tribal identity had left Kansas and resettled in the Indian Territory. Ironically, one of the principle memorials left to the Delaware was the railroad stops along the Union Pacific, Eastern Division. After leaving the settlements of Wyandotte and Armstrong, the stations were named **Secondine, Tiblow (after Henry Tiblow), Lenape, Journeycake, and Fall Leaf.**

A few Delaware chose to take U.S. citizenship, legally severing their ties to the tribe, and remained in Kansas. Eventually, some of these Kansas Delaware sold their lands and purchased citizenship in the Cherokee Nation. Descendants of these Kansas Delaware, most notably those of the Grinter family, can be found living in the Kansas City, Kansas area today.

From two to three hundred Delaware protested the 1867 treaty and remained in Kansas for approximately six months after the majority of the tribe left. The Indian agent withheld final payment for their land until they agreed to leave. After months of waiting for some word from Washington in response to their pleas for a separate reservation apart from the Cherokee, these Delaware, who were literally homeless and facing starvation, finally removed to the Indian Territory. There, they moved to the Peoria Reserve for nearly three years, in protest of the Cherokee Treaty. Facing threats of forced removal from Peoria lands, and promised a more active voice in the tribal government, these "wild" Delaware (as the government termed the more traditional members of the tribe) finally located upon Cherokee Lands. The two tribal government have periodically been at odds, and to this day, the Delaware Tribe has faced a continual challenge to its right of self governance.

In April 1997, the tribe held a rededication ceremony at White Church, in Kansas City, Kansas, to mark the completion of a historic project in cooperation with the Kansas State Historical Society to clean and repair nine remaining gravestones of Delaware people and of Isaac Mundy, the tribal blacksmith. At this ceremony the Oklahoma descendants of Delaware buried in the cemetery behind the church met the parishioners of White Church, the descendants of Isaac Munday, and several Grinter descendants of the Kansas Delaware. The chief of the Oklahoma Delaware spoke to the group about the relationship between Christian and traditional religion among the Delaware, and once more the voices of Delaware people were raised in friendship on the grounds of the old Methodist mission.

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11. Hauptman, *Between Two Fires*, illustration following 80.
12. Morgan, *The Indian Journals*, 65.
13. Arellano, Fay, comp. *Delaware Trails: Some Tribal Records 1842-1907* (Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 1996), 139-51 and 164.
14. Weslager, *The Delaware Indians*, 511-513.
15. Morgan, *The Indian Journals*, 65.
16. *Ibid.*, 63.
17. As the story was told to the author as a child in Oklahoma by her mother, Nadine Neil. James Rementer of

Dewey, Okla. provided the Delaware words for the waiting snow, and confirmed that traditional Delawares Nora Dean and Lucy Blalock also spoke of this old Lenape saying.

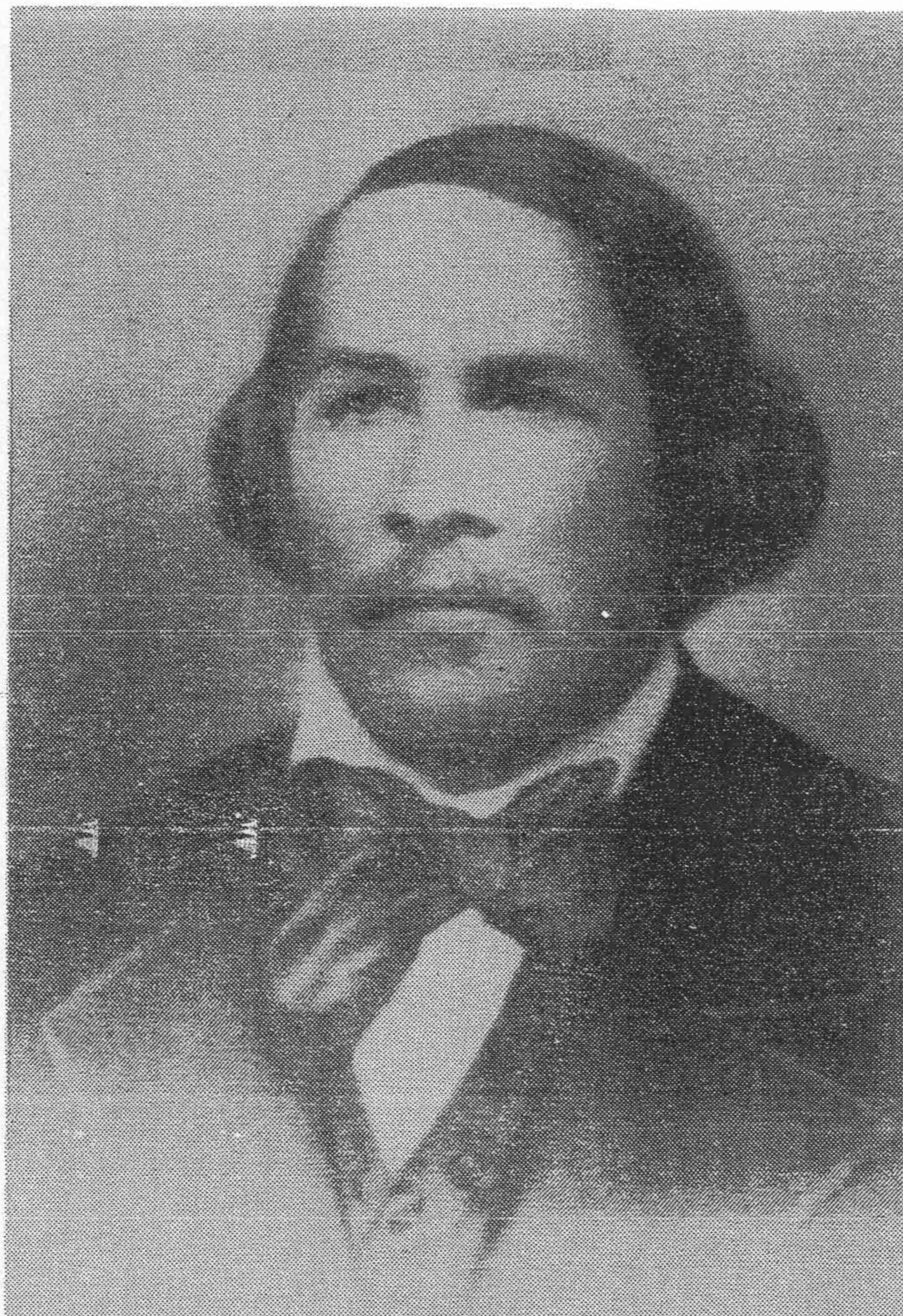
18. Barry, Louise, *The Beginning of the West* (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), 208 William Anderson, 298 Capt. Patterson, 737 Nah-ko-min. Capt. Ketchum's date of death is on his gravestone at White Church, Kansas City, Kans. John Conner's date of death is not known, but his brother, James, became chief after his death in the early 1870's.

19. Weslager, *The Delaware Indian*, 355 concerning Anderson. Nah-ko-min is named as former chief of the Turkey clan in Memorial of Chiefs and Headmen of the Delaware Tribe to William P. Dole, 20 Jan., 1863, Microfilm Publication no. M234, Microfilm roll 276, frame 579, Record Group 75, National Archives.

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James Secondine ... Delaware

The Wyandot Nation of Kansas

By

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Principal Chief Wyandot Nation of Kansas

The Wyandots have had a significant and honorable role in history. This nation often exerted influence upon the complex interrelationships between the diverse people and cultures that met on the North American Continent. They stood firm despite violent social and economic upheaval, unrest during the Civil War, loss of our lands, destruction of our natural resources, racial bigotry, ridicule, and being ignored by the same government for whom our members fought and died. The embers of heritage and culture have been kept alive for opportunities when they might be fanned into the flame of brotherhood and cooperation with all people of good will.

It is generally accepted that the first Americans originated from Asia and, as a result of climate changes and migratory patterns, probably crossed to North America by way of the Bering Strait. The Royal Ontario Museum places the migration of some Native Americans as taking place over 15,000 years ago. A. J. MacDougall, S. J. notes that the natural movement to obtain food, shelter, and improved living conditions would have encouraged a natural flow toward the south and southeast. There were so many mergers, migrations, adoptions, varying names for the same tribes, similar patterns of dress, food, customs and warfare that it is difficult to trace with precision the various tribes that inhabited the