

## A CREEK PIONEER

Notes Concerning "Aunt Sue" Rogers and Her Family.

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman.

One of the most brilliant women of the Creek Nation was Mrs. Susannah Drew Rogers who was usually called "Aunt Sue" by her many friends and admirers. Mrs. Rogers belonged to a distinguished Creek family being the grand daughter of Chief William McIntosh and a great niece of Chief Chilly McIntosh.

For charge of treason to his tribe in signing the treaty giving up their country to the whites of Alabama in 1824, General McIntosh was executed. In a pathetic letter signed by Peggy and Susannah McIntosh, his widows, at Line Creek, Fayette County, May 3, 1825, addressed to Col. D. G. Campbell and Major J. Merriwether, U. S. Commissioners, it was stated: "When you see this letter, stained with the blood of my husband, the last drop of which is now spilt for the friendship he has shown for your people, I know you will remember your pledge to us in behalf of your nation . . . you would assist and protect us . . . here I am, driven from the ashes of my smoking dwelling, left with nothing but my poor little naked hungry children, who need some immediate aid from our white friends; and we lean upon you, while you lean upon your government . . . I tried to get a horse to take my little children, and some provisions to last us to the white settlements."<sup>1</sup>

The parents of Susannah Drew Rogers were William Drew and Delilah McIntosh Drew. Her father's elder brother, John Drew was a partner of Sam Houston in a store they kept during Houston's sojourn among the Cherokees in the Indian Territory. The sisters of Mrs. Delilah McIntosh Drew were Rebecca and Hetty McIntosh. They had one brother, D. N. McIntosh, the second son of Gen. William McIntosh and his wife Susannah. Chilly, the eldest son of the General, died near Fame, Oklahoma, which was about ten miles west of Checotah, and was buried in the McIntosh cemetery near Fame, as was D. N. McIntosh.

When Lafayette visited Alabama he entered the state at Fort Mitchell, on the Chattahoochee River; his coming excited great enthusiasm and he was escorted by several hundred people among whom were a number of Indians. He was welcomed by Chilly McIntosh with fifty naked and highly painted Creek warriors. Lafayette was seated in a sulky which was drawn up hill by the Indians to the place where he was greeted by the Alabama delegation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Indian Affairs," *American State Papers*, Vol. 2, p. 763.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas McAdory Owen, A.M., LL.B., *Annals of Alabama, 1819-1900* (Birmingham: 1900), p. 677.

William Drew's father died when he was a little boy; his mother had a long Indian name which Aunt Sue could not recall. William, while still very young, was caught in one of the concentration camps in which at that time the Indians were being collected to be sent west; he was brought to Indian Territory with the first party of Indians before the McIntosh Creeks came. While William was still a lad he was taken by some Frenchmen just west of the Arkansas line to act as English interpreter for them. The party was captured by Osage Indians and the Frenchmen were all murdered on Grand River but young Drew was later returned to his people.

The Drews were part French, the correct spelling of the name being Drieux. It was misspelled at the time the census of the Indians was made. There were three of the Drieux brothers; Aunt Sue's grandfather who died in the old nation; one who returned to France and the third who lived in New Orleans where he owned a drug store. This man always used the correct spelling of his name and remonstrated with his brother for spelling it the English way. The Drews went into the Cherokee Nation from the French colony in Louisiana. Aunt Sue said they never did any manual labor in their lives.

When the Drew family arrived in the West they settled north of the site of Vian, on Vian Creek near the old Military Road that connected Fort Smith and Fort Gibson. It was there that Aunt Sue was born August 15, 1844. Her full blood Cherokee grandmother had settled in the hills back of Vian and one of the little girl's first memories was of her family making maple sugar in that vicinity.

The Drew's home was not far from Dwight Mission where they attended church; the first death the child ever saw occurred at the Mission when the wife of the Rev. Worcester Willy died. The clergyman not only closed his wife's eyes in death but made her coffin and preached her funeral sermon when the Reverend Stephen Foreman was prevented by heavy snow from reaching the mission.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. Drew moved from Susannah's birthplace when she was three or four years old and at the time of the birth of her sister Kate they were living on Illinois River. Drew owned a store in the Creek Nation north of the site of Muskogee and north of the Arkansas River. In locating the Drew plantation of 1200 acres Aunt Sue said it was in sight across and above the mouth of the Verdigris River by one standing on top of Confederate Hill. The three daughters of General William McIntosh lived in that vicinity which became known as the McIntosh settlement. Aunt Sue's grand-

<sup>3</sup> Rev. Worcester Willy, *A Tale of Home and War* (Portland, Maine: 1888), pp. 47-49.

mother, Susannah McIntosh who lived on a high hill near the Verdigris, owned two Negro families who worked her land. The child spent part of the time with her grandmother. When the family fled to Texas at the beginning of the Civil War they took their slaves with them but were obliged to abandon their live stock. William Drew died in April, 1860, at the age of sixty-three, in Texas, where he was buried.

Susannah first attended school on a plantation in Texas after which she was taken to Huntsville, Alabama, to enter a private school and she was there when the war started. Later she attended the State Normal School at Holly Springs, Mississippi.

According to Mrs. Rogers her grandfather McIntosh had two wives—Peggy, a Cherokee, and Susannah, a Creek, for whom Aunt Sue was named. "Two Indian wives graced his home, Susannah Coe, a Creek woman and Peggy, a Cherokee. Residing at another plantation home some fifty miles distant and which he owned, was a third wife, Eliza, a daughter of Stephen Hawkins . . . Chilly McIntosh, eldest son of Chief McIntosh and Eliza, his wife, was born . . . about 1800."<sup>4</sup>

Chilly was one of the signers of the treaty of February 12, 1825, for which his father was killed but he escaped owing to his light complexion; Menawa and the other avenging Creeks took him for a white man and allowed him to leave the house where the slaying took place. Chilly was an intelligent man of good manners who had much influence with his tribesmen; his portrait was painted by John Mix Stanley in June, 1843, but it was burned when the Smithsonian Institution was destroyed in 1865. The artist described Chilly as speaking, "English fluently, and has seen much of civilized life, having spent much time in Washington transacting business with the heads of Departments in behalf of his people. He is among the first men of his nation."<sup>5</sup>

Roley McIntosh, chief of the Lower Creeks, the brother of William, lived with his mother on her plantation overlooking the Verdigris River until it was burned by Northern soldiers. After the death of General McIntosh Roley married his widow. The family fled to Texas and Roley who was an old man made his home there; he served as chief of the Creeks many years and died in 1863. He was buried in the McIntosh cemetery in Marion County, Texas, about four miles from Jefferson. There is no "D" in the Creek language, according to Aunt Sue, so the Indians were unable to pro-

<sup>4</sup> John Bartlett Meserve, "The McIntoshes," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, X (September, 1932), pp. 313-14, 320.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas L. McKenney and James Hall, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Frederick Webb Hodge, editor) (Edinburgh: 1933) Vol. XV, No. 4, pp. 266, 269, 272 note 14; J. M. Stanley, *Portraits of North American Indians* (Washington: 1852), pp. 13-14.

nounce the name Roderick, and called their chief "Roley." The McIntoshes all had some education but they were conservative and always spoke Creek unless forced to speak English.

From Union Mission, March 22, 1830, the Rev. W. F. Vaill wrote the editor of the *Religious Intelligencer* telling of some of the Indian pupils: "Besides these [John Davis and Henry Perri-man(sic)] there is the third young man in my school, son of old Gen. McIntosh . . . Has been married and lost his wife, Though very young, and in darkness herself, yet on her dying bed, she exhorted her husband to join the praying people . . . The last winter he joined my school . . . A more industrious scholar I never taught . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Aunt Sue saw Sam Houston in Texas when she was a little girl. She was with her family at Matagorda Beach where they were having their Negroes roast oysters for a picnic dinner when Houston and his party arrived and her father introduced his family to the General.

Aunt Sue stated that Ben Hawkins married Rebecca McIntosh, the eldest daughter of General William McIntosh by his wife Susannah. Hawkins was killed when he was returning from Mexico with a patent to lands in that country. His home was in Cass County near Jefferson, Texas. Hawkins' widow married a white man named Haggerty. She had two daughters, Louisa Hawkins, who married James Scott, and Anna Hawkins the wife of Sam McFarland.

In 1866, Susannah Drew and her aunt Rebecca McIntosh returned to the Indian Territory from Texas. They followed the Texas Road, crossing Red River at Crowder's Ferry and the Canadian at North Fork Town. They hired some Cherokees to build a hewed log house for a ranch home. They remained in the Territory until November when they returned to Texas. In 1867 Susannah brought her mother and their Negroes back to the Territory. She related that it required almost a year to drive their hogs north to their home.

After the death of his first wife, Sarah Ann Adair, William Penn Adair on December 8, 1868, married Susannah Drew ("Aunt Sue") at her home on North Fork River; Colonel Adair lived at the mouth of Spavinaw Creek, east of Adair and Aunt Sue said it was their home for seventeen years. Col. William Penn Adair who stood six feet two in his stocking feet, had dark eyes and wore his hair long. He was a quiet, reserved man, a fine lawyer who always won his suits.

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<sup>6</sup> *Religious Intelligencer*, Vol. XV, No. 4, p. 62, cols. 1-2.

Adair was a prominent Mason; when the Flint Lodge No. 74 was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Arkansas on November 9, 1853, he became the secretary. He was a senator from Flint District of the Cherokee Nation during the years 1855, 1857 and 1859. He represented the Saline District as a senator in 1871. In 1861 when Stand Watie organized a company to support the Confederacy William Penn Adair served in Company D. In 1862 the Second Cherokee Mounted Volunteers was recruited and Adair was made the colonel.

After the Civil War the Southern Cherokees sent a delegation to Washington in 1866 to adjust their affairs; the group was made up of Richard Fields, John Rollin Ridge who had gone east from his home in California, Saladin Watie, Elias Cornelius Boudinot and William Penn Adair. By an agreement entered into between the Shawnees and Cherokees in 1869 the Shawnees were adopted into the Cherokee tribe; this agreement was negotiated by and between H. D. Reese and William Penn Adair who had been appointed delegates by the National Council.<sup>7</sup>

Colonel Adair made a notable address before the Indian Agricultural Society at Muskogee in October, 1878. A Cherokee historian described him as "magnetic, logical and frankly agreeable, the ablest and most brilliant of all Cherokees" while a white historian said he was "a shrewd lawyer and generally regarded as a leader among his people." He never attained the chieftainship of his nation but he was elected assistant chief in 1879.<sup>8</sup>

He represented his nation in Washington many years and soon after his marriage he and his bride left for Washington. Aunt Sue remained in the capital city all of 1868 and 1870 and they spent part of every year there for twelve years.

When they first arrived in Washington they stayed at the National Hotel or the Metropolitan Hotel until they could find an apartment. It was necessary for Adair to have a large room where meetings of the Cherokee delegates could be held. They lived in apartments on Twelfth and on K streets.

Colonel and Mrs. Adair were in Washington when President Andrew Johnson went out of office. They attended the inaugural ball at the time General Grant became president and frequently visited the White House as General Grant was very fond of Colonel Adair.

Mrs. Adair lost her sight suddenly while crossing Grand River on a ferry and she spent the months from October to May, 1873

<sup>7</sup> Emmet Starr, *History of the Cherokee Indians* (Oklahoma City: 1921), pp. 143, 148, 180, 267, 272, 296.

<sup>8</sup> Editorial, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, IV (September, 1926), p. 255.

or 1874, in an infirmary in Baltimore to have her eyes treated. Her young sister Jessie Drew went to Washington with Colonel and Mrs. Adair to help care for the latter after she lost her sight. Colonel Adair took Miss Drew to the White House to meet President Grant. "When they came back to where we were living I had a roomful of company. We asked Jessie what she thought of the President but she would not answer, just hung her head. Finally Colonel Adair said 'Jessie, why don't you answer?' After a pause she looked up and said, 'He has no raising.' We asked her what she meant and she replied, 'Why he never asked me to sit down.'"

Mrs. Adair related that she was invited to go through the South with General Grant's party when he was touring the country but she was detained at Chouteau by the death of her cousin's baby. She came to Muskogee to buy a little casket as they could not be had in Chouteau in those days. While she was in Patterson's store she heard a train whistle and Major Robb, manager of the store, told her it was President Grant's special train. Mrs. Adair hurried to the depot and asked the agent for permission to return to Chouteau on that train as she was in a great hurry. When the train stopped at Muskogee President Grant appeared on the back platform to speak and when he saw Mrs. Adair he called out, "There is an old friend of mine. Come right up here, Mrs. Adair." She explained about the baby's death and the President gave her permission to travel aboard his special train.

Mrs. Adair knew President Hayes and she went to see him to ask him to see that Colonel Adair's Osage fee was paid. While waiting to talk to the President, Mrs. Hayes came into the room and visited with her, and Aunt Sue thought her a pretty woman. She asked many questions concerning the Indians; wished to know if it was difficult to keep them from having uprisings. When she asked what the Indians looked like Mrs. Adair told her that she was an Indian; Mrs. Hayes appeared astonished and said: "Why you are more cultivated than any one I have met in a long time."

Mrs. Adair met both Garfield and Arthur; she was on her way from Vinita to Claremore when the message came that President Garfield had been shot. "I sat right down in the station and wrote a long letter to Dr. Garnet of Washington. I told him that the delegates must make a strong fight against giving up the Indian Territory. They wanted to open it to white people and make a state of it. I wrote that the white people were more savage than the Indians since they had killed their president. Dr. Garnet published my whole letter in the Washington paper and I didn't like it. I never liked publicity."

Colonel Adair died in Washington at the age of fifty, October 21, 1880. Several years later his widow was married to William H.

Rogers, a white man in Muskogee. Her second husband was the son of John Rogers, founder of Fort Smith. Her brother-in-law, Buck Rogers, named W. Buckner Rogers, after the missionary, built a home on the Honey Springs battle field in 1870. The house was a large story-and-a-half building north of Honey Spring about twenty-five feet from the Texas Road. The stone structure still standing on the battle field was Roger's smoke house. In this hospitable home, many people passing up and down the Texas Road were entertained. Persons traveling from Muskogee to Eufaula usually broke the journey there and spent the night with the Rogers family. Robert L. Owen, Frederick B. Severs, the Stidhams, the Graysons, the Crabtrees and many others enjoyed the comforts of Roger's home. "Uncle Buck and Aunt Kate" at one time lived at Fishertown where Mr. Rogers operated William Fisher's gin. Buck's brother Tom lived about a half mile north of him on the Texas Road. At the time the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad reached Muskogee in 1872, Buck Rogers built large ovens there and baked bread for the men who were building the road.

William F. McIntosh (son of Chilly) lived north of Honey Spring on the south side of Big Elk Creek, where he kept a toll bridge. Mrs. Delilah McIntosh Drew also kept a toll bridge on Little Elk Creek, about half a mile from her home which was a mile east of Checotah.

In the cemetery half a mile north of Buck Roger's home were buried Delilah McIntosh Drew, Jessie Drew (sister of "Aunt Sue"), the wife of Tuxie Carey, four children of Mr. and Mrs. Buck Rogers, and Tommy Scott. In connection with Roger's place was an orchard that extended from his home almost to the Missouri- Kansas & Texas Railway.

Mrs. Rogers' husband died in 1889. His estate amounted to about \$100,000 and his will was hotly contested by his heirs who instituted suit to break his will by which he left the greater portion of his property to his widow.<sup>9</sup> Fourteen lawyers were employed in the case: Messrs. John H. Rogers, James F. Read, B. H. Tabor,

<sup>9</sup>"Last Monday the following, as the will of the late Captain Wm. H. Rogers, was filed by Mr. J. B. Forester, attorney for Mrs. Rogers, executrix:

"Know all men by these parents (sic): That I, Wm. H. Rogers, of the City of Fort Smith and State of Arkansas, now temporarily residing at Muskogee, in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory, being in sound mind and memory, and being desirous of making disposition of my estate, while I am able to do so, do make and establish this my last will and testament, . . . .

"Second, it is my wish that my beloved wife, Susan M. Rogers, be the sole executrix of this my last will and testament.

"Third, I hereby give, devise and bequeath to my said wife, Susan M. Rogers, all of my estate, real, personal, and mixed of every description, where the same may be, either in the Indian Territory, or in the State of Arkansas, of which I may die

R. T. Powell, R. W. McFarlane and T. L. Browne for the contestants; Messrs. B. T. Duval, W. M. Cravens, J. S. Little, C. B. Neal, W. W. H. Clayton, Jos. Forrester and Robert L. Owen for the contestees. The contest tried in the circuit court of Greenwood district resulted in breaking the will.<sup>10</sup>

Mrs. Rogers was appointed clerk of the supreme court of the Creek Nation and records in the Oklahoma Historical Society show that she was serving in 1894, 1895 and 1897. She was one of the commissioners appointed to represent the Creek Nation in the matter of determining who were citizens of that tribe in order that certificates of allotment might be issued to them. The other commissioners were J. R. Gregory and Abraham Kernels.<sup>11</sup>

Mrs. Adair helped officiate at the birth of the late Will Rogers; she gave him the name of her noted husband and he appears on the "Authenticated Rolls of 1880, Cherokee Nation, Cooweescoowee District as No. 2340 Rogers, Col. W. P. Cherokee 7m male."<sup>12</sup>

On her ninety-first birthday Mrs. Rogers traveled in a manner she had never tried before. She was invited to make a flight by Mr. L. L. Rupert, manager of the Muskogee airport, in his little Taylor Cub. She was pleased with the experience and exclaimed that she would ride in any plane she could climb into. Later in the day she took a second ride through the courtesy of Mr. Frank Phillips of Bartlesville who sent his luxurious cabin ship for the express purpose of giving "Aunt Sue" pleasure. The ship, a new 78,000 Boeing ten passenger, all-metal plane, carried aloft Mrs. Rogers and her guests, Father A. C. Taeyaerts of the Church of the Assumption; Mrs. John G. Lieber, her foster daughter, and Howard Lieber; Mrs. Ed Merrick, cousin of Mrs. Rogers; L. C. Gen-

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seized and possessed, or entitled to, and to have and to hold to the said Susan M., her heirs and assigns forever.'

"Mr. Rogers also willed to his widow 'all of his real estate of every description; all of the money, all bonds, bills, stocks, mortgages and choses in action which may belong to me and may be due me at my death. . .'. He bequeathed to his sister, 'Margaret Chollar, the brick house and lot in the city of Fort Smith . . . in which she is now living, and also to convey to my neice, Mary Anderson, daughter of Emma Johnson, my youngest sister, one of my tenement houses in Fort Smith . . .'

"Witness my hand this seventh day of September, A. D. 1889.

"Wm. H. Rogers.

"Dr. James O. Callahan and Ben T. Duval certified that this will was signed in their presence by W. H. Rogers . . . this seventh day of September, A. D. 1889. . . . Ben T. Duval, Jas. O. Callahan." —*Fort Smith Elevator*, October 18, 1889, p. 3, col. 5.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, October 10, 1890, p. 3, col. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Indian Archives, 35054 "Creek Pastures & Stock"; 30712 "Foreign Relations—Creek-Seminole File"; 35664 "Creek Principal Chief;" in Oklahoma Historical Society.

<sup>12</sup> Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.

try and Francis Bardon, Associated Press representatives; Paul A. Bruner, managing editor of the *Muskogee Phoenix* and *Times-Democrat*, and Ed Nelson of the Phillips Company. The plane was piloted by Clarence Clark.<sup>13</sup>

Mrs. Rogers was always present at the Old Settlers meeting held annually during the Muskogee State Fair. It gave her great pleasure to meet her old friends and her usual enquiry was "Is there any one here older than I am?" On learning that she held the place of honor she would settle down to a day filled with satisfaction.

Mrs. Rogers died April 4, 1939, at the home of Mrs. John G. Lieber, 333 Fredonia Street; her funeral rites were conducted at the Church of the Assumption by the Rev. A. C. Taeyaerts on the morning of April 15 and she was buried in Greenhill Cemetery, Muskogee. She was survived by four nieces; Mrs. Lieber, Mrs. Pearl Morrow, also of Muskogee; Mrs. J. C. Wise, Wainwright, Oklahoma; and Mrs. Jesse Parker, Washington, D. C.; a nephew, Buck Rogers, and a grand-nephew Howard Lieber.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Muskogee Phoenix*, October 15, 1935, p. 1, col. 1 and p. 2, col. 6.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, April 5, 1939, p. 1, cols. 2 and 3. Material not otherwise cited was obtained in interviews with Mrs. Rogers.