

Chronicles of Oklahoma

Volume V.

September 1927

Number 3

EDITORIAL

W. P. Brown, Governor of Chickasaw Nation

The following letter is sufficient proof that W. P. Brown was at one time Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. We give the letter in its entirety that you may know something of the discussion had prior to this date. Miss Wright has given us some very interesting facts in this connection which the readers of the Chronicles will appreciate.

Miss Wright has a vast amount of information concerning the Choctaw and Chickasaw people and is considered good authority on matters pertaining to their past history.

As a reader of Chronicles you will be pleased to know that Miss Wright has consented to give us an article soon bearing on matters of intense interest concerning the life, habits and government of these splendid people.

J. Y. B.

Olney, Oklahoma
May 27, 1927

Mr. J. Y. Bryce, Secretary,
Oklahoma State Historical Society,
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

My dear Mr. Bryce:

The June number of the Chronicles was received here yesterday, and I want to tell you how much pleasure it has given me to read the very interesting historical contributions the magazine contains.

I was also interested in your editorial with reference to W. P. Brown who was Governor of the Chickasaw Nation from 1870 to 1871. If you have not already found documents to prove that he was governor at that time, would refer you to the copy of the Constitution and Laws of the Chickasaw Nation in your library, which is entitled, "Chikasha Nan-Uhplisc." You will find that Governor W. P. Brown signed the laws passed by the sessions of the Chickasaw Legislature of October, 1870, and June, 1871, and, also, the first part of the session of September, 1871. I find that the first law signed by him, given in this volume, was on September 3, 1870, and the last law on September 7, 1871.

In the original manuscript of these laws, W. P. Brown also signed the measures, dated September 15, 1871, and September 18, 1871, but his name is very neatly and deliberately scratched out and bears the signature of Thomas Parker, as governor, just below. As the contents of these

two measures are interesting bits of history. I herewith give them respectively, from the original manuscript in English:

"An Act authorizing the National Secretary to have the Capitol bell hung.

Sec. 1st. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation that the National Secretary be and he is hereby authorized to employ some competent mechanic to examine the cupalo & see if said cupalo is fit and substantial enough to hold the weight of the Bell and to hang the National bell in the cupalo of the Capitol; and for such labor the mechanic shall receive ten dollars.

Sec. 2nd. Be it further enacted, That the National bell shall not be rung unless on National occasions as follows: For the calling of the members of the Legislature together for the Sessions of Court; for religious meetings and for fire in Tishomingo; or for such occasions as the Legislature may designate.

Sec. 3rd. Be it further enacted, That if any person not authorized shall enter the Capitol and ring the bell, he, she, or they so offending shall be subject to a fine of not more than ten dollars for every offense, as the County Court of Tishomingo may impose and such fine shall be put in the National Treasury for County purposes.

Sec. 4th. Be it further enacted that this act shall take effect from and after the time the bell is hung."

"Approved Sept. 15th, 1871."

~~W. P. Brown~~
"Thos. Parker Governor."

"An Act in Relation to filling vacant offices.

Sec. 1st. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation That from and after the passage of this act all appointments and Commissions given by the Governor for filling vacant offices shall not extend beyond the first annual election of the people; or the first annual Session of the Legislature as the case may be.

Sec. 2nd. Be it further enacted, That if the vacant offices are filled by election by the people or by election of the joint vote of the Legislature, the people or the Legislature, as the case may be, shall be filled by election; but such election shall be to fill the vacancy in office for their expired term only.

Sec. 3rd. Be it further enacted, That this act shall not be construed as to interfere with the appointing power filling vacancies for the unexpired term of the former incumbent already provided for by the Constitution or laws."

"Approved Sept. 18th, 1871 "

~~W. P. Brown~~
"Thos. Parker Governor"

It may be of further interest to you to know that Rev. Allen Wright, former governor of the Choctaws from 1866 to 1870, was commissioned by the Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation, in 1872, to translate the laws of the Nation from the English to the native language, as the Choctaws and the Chickasaws have the same written language, their spoken language being very similar except as to some dialectal forms. The above mentioned volume,

"Chickasha Nan-Uhpisa," in the native tongue, represents the results of Reverend Wright's labor on his commission from the Chickasaws.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Muriel H. Wright.