family traditions

A Foundation built on LOVE

Heirlooms

family ties

For The Joy Of The Lord Is Your Strength
Our Church Family!

at Church
In the Garden

Play Ball!

love the children!

Breakfast.... Good Food!

Visit our Home and
Work on Our History

Remember!
Mary Ann Checote-Kane
4-10-3011

Mary Ann Checote-Kane
4-10-11

Ruth "Ronnie" Betrillie
4-10-3011
New Town Church
4-10-2011

Tyler Watahell
age 9

Victoria Watahell
age 7

Anthony Watahell
age 11

Linda Cusker
New Town Church 4-10-2011
Oklahoma, OK.

Ruth "Pernie" Bextillia
4-10-2011
Daddy Scott helps with History meeting
10-2-2011
Juanita  Cherofah  & Mary Ann Cherofah-Kane
4-9-2011

Rita & Tony
4-3-2011

Hon. David Dunson, Mary Ann Kane
New Town Lane
April 3, 2011
Dale
the "only" Man!
4-10-2011
great person & hard
worker!
Indian mission Conference Oct 22, 1874
Rev. Samuel Jefferson Checoti painted at his
grandfather Chief Samuel Checoti (ref. 1874)

Rev. Tom Washington
at New Town Church
1993

Lilly and Claude Cox
summer 1996
Peiy Ningme

Summer 1941

Don Chee with his father Rev. Samuel S. Chee

Middle: Students
New Town Church

Celebrations

100 years + 166 years

Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

150 year Celebration

Oct. 1993
NORTHERN DISTRICT

Central Region
Northeast Region

SOUTHERN DISTRICT

Southwest Region
Southeast Region

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Okmulgee, OK 74447

Starting From:

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City
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Zip

Get Directions  Get Reverse Directions

Newtown United Methodist Church

14460 N 210 Rd
Okmulgee, OK 74447

Pastor: Rev David Dunson
Home: 918-752-0877


2/17/2011
Revival

"Living the Spirit"

7 PM Nightly

Sunday, Sept 19    Speaker: Rev Fred Lowe
                  Devotion: Newtown UMC

Monday, Sept 20   Speaker: Paul Tecumseh
                  Devotion: Big Cussetah UMC

Tuesday, Sept 21  Speaker: June Thomas
                  Devotion: Pickett Chapel UMC

"Love the life you live in Christ!

Refreshments served following service

Please call Rev David Dunson for Information

918-752-0877 or 918-758-7002

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Chief's Grandson Sees Last Dream Come True

By MURIEL SOHL

Eighty-three-year-old Sam Checote watched with dimming eyes the unfolding of his dream which was climaxxed with the New Town Church centennial last Sunday.

As Lt. Gov. Berry and many other notables, praised his grandfather, who founded the church, Sam's proud head was held high. And when, in a quivering, but still strong voice, he read his people in the singing of the old Creek hymns, he looked like the happiest and most grateful man in the whole world.

When Sam tells of his hopes and disappointments leading up to the celebration the reason for his happiness appears.

"Last May I had a vision of my grandfather urging me to do something as time was growing short. I thought about it for awhile and finally decided that when a fellow gets too old to preach he can still be of some use," he related.

Deciding upon the plan of the church celebration to honor his grandfather, Sam started in to raise money for his project. The Creek Indian Memorial Association turned 400 booklets over to him for which he would receive $200 if all could be sold. Selling was very slow, however, and his hopes fell a little.

A $50 gift started the fund rolling and then 25 of the books were sold by Mayor Wood. Next $100 was raised and Mrs. Jean Risor made other collections. Encouraged, Rev. Checote started writing notices to church members and making plans for a program.

"The program plans were just too much for me and I asked and received aid from them from many people," he stated.

"Everyone assisted wonderfully. I don't know how to praise or thank them all for their work," the minister said, swallowing back a lump in his throat.

Sam was raised by his grandfather, Chief Samuel Checote, and following in his footsteps, he too became a minister at an early age. Like his grandfather, Sam encountered many difficulties in bringing the white man's religion to his people.

He recalled an assignment as a circuit preacher, when he was sent to the Sac and Fox territory. He had no place to eat or stay and slept on a bench at night. His preaching was done in a cow lot.

Despite these and many other difficulties, he founded five churches. In 1934 his throat gave out and he could no longer speak lengthily. He asked for a years leave but was retired.

Sam has been in ill health for the past seven or eight years, but still manages to work some with the Indians in town, calling at their houses.

"Now that my one dream has been fulfilled, am ready for a long rest," the minister concluded.

7 In Hospital After Explosion

SULPHUR (AP) - Seven persons are in a hospital here Tuesday suffering from burns received in an explosion following a highway accident Monday night.

Clarence Andrews, Oklahoma City truck driver, is in critical condition with extensive second- and third-degree burns on the arms, face and back.

The other six injured, all members of the Davis fire department, are in serious condition. They are Byron Mayberry, D.E. Locklear, Earl Sartin, Willard Warren, A.R. Wallace and Willie Warner.

Most of the six received extensive flesh burns, especially around the eyes and hands.

The accident occurred on U.S. Highway 72 about one mile north of Davis. A northbound heavy truck collided with two semi-trailer trucks. When one of the semi-trailers caught fire, the Davis fire department was summoned, but the truck exploded while efforts were being made to stop the blaze.

Times Want Ads Bring Results

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Okmulgee, Oklahoma
September 12, 1949

Dear Brother:

The Newtown Indian Methodist Church, near Okmulgee, is planning a homecoming meeting of all its members and former members, and friends, in the nature of a Centennial Memorial celebration to be held on the church grounds one mile west and one-half mile north of Okmulgee, from September 23rd through the 25th.

All of the former pastors of the church, whose addresses are known, as well as all of the Presiding Elders or District Superintendents, and the presiding Bishops who have served the church, are being cordially invited and urged to attend.

Please notify your members and friends of your church. We are planning to record the songs of the Indians, so we especially want all singers to attend.

Food will be provided. Come prepared as usual for a three-day encampment.

Sincerely yours,

Samuel J. Checote

SJC/h
Grandson of Church Founder to Speak at Centennial

Sam Checo, Okmulgee, points to a picture of his grandfather, the late Sam Checo, who was one of the leaders in the establishment of the New Town Methodist church which will celebrate its 100th anniversary Sunday. The picture shows the Indian Mission Conference meeting Oct. 22, 1874, near Eufaula.

Church Celebrates Centennial, But It's Delayed Nine Years

It's a little white frame church in the country with an old-fashioned steeple and a bell inside—like New Town Methodist church close to Okmulgee.

This year it is 100 years old. And this Sunday the 120 members will meet to celebrate.

They're only going to celebrate 100 years, though. They've always intended to celebrate that 100th anniversary, and they're just not getting around to it. Those extra nine years can't get in the way of a good centennial celebration.

The congregation is made up of Creek Indians, people who are at the core of the history of Oklahoma. Their church was begun when belonging to any church caused trouble. When they first met in 1841 to organize, they had to meet secretly because it was against the law of the Creeks for Christian services to be held.

He is an old man now, retired from the Methodist ministry. His grandfather was one of the leaders of the New Town Methodist church close to Okmulgee.

Bishop W. A. Smith, whose close relationship with Indian people of his Oklahoma-New Mexico parish is well known, will speak at 10:30 a.m. Sunday.


Lt. Gov. James F. Berry will speak as will Dr. William H. Mansfield, pastor of the First Methodist church, Okmulgee.

W. O. Roberts, superintendent of the five Civilized tribes and M. W. T. Wheatley of the Tinker airforce base, will speak in the afternoon. Miss Ethel Wright, editor of the Cherokee Advocate, Okmulgee, will speak at 3:30 p.m. and Rev. W. U. Whit, for 22 years superintendent of the Indian mission, will give the closing address.

The Sunday meeting is actually the close of a three-day meeting of the Creek Indians.

Death Drivers' Penalty Urged

A resolution calling for imprisonment of drivers involved in traffic law violations which lead to the death of an individual, was adopted by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators as delegates ended the annual convention in the Biltmore hotel.

The resolution submitted by A. W. Magness, director of the New Jersey division of motor vehicles, declared the "killing and maiming human beings by motor vehicles has reached a point where it is disgraceful to a civilized nation."

It further stated that every likelihood these deaths will increase and that it is recognized in many instances they are attributable to "vocations of specific sections of the road code."

In most cases, the solution stated, "these violations go unpunished or are punished in only a nominal manner."

Another resolution adopted provided the evening session urged the enforcement agencies devote a considerable portion of highway safety effort to pedestrian protection.

State to Fight Tax Fund Split Attack

Enid Sends Delegates

Tokyo Scouts
CENTENNIAL OF THE NEW TOWN METHODIST CHURCH

By Muriel H. Wright

One of the early church organizations in the Indian Territory, the New Town Methodist Church located in the country about a mile northwest of Okmulgee, celebrated its centennial in September, 1949. This centennial was long overdue, one which the Indian congregation of the little white frame church with its steeple and bell had long intended to celebrate, for the first membership was organized in the Creek Nation 109 years ago.

Every mission church in this country was planted by some consecrated Christian character, the light of whose personality shines the brighter as his work endures through the years. The one who organized the New Town Church was the Reverend Samuel Checote.\(^1\) Born in 1819 in the Chattahoochee Valley, Alabama, he was of the Hitchiti speaking people of the white or peace town of Sawokli, his family belonging to the McIntosh Party of the Lower Creek Division in the old nation east. As a lad of eight years, he attended the Asbury Manual Labor School operated by the Methodist Church at Fort Mitchell, Alabama. He came to the Indian Territory in 1829, his people first locating north of the Arkansas River, near present Muskogee, but later settling farther west in the Creek Nation, in the region of Okmulgee.

Checote’s attendance at Asbury School in Alabama brought him under the influence of the Methodist Mission work in Northeastern Indian Territory where the Reverend John Harrell of the Missouri Conference held evangelistic camp meetings as early as 1831. John Harrell was transferred to the Arkansas Conference in 1836, to hold meetings and establish churches on both sides of the Arkansas state line, which was the beginning of his life’s work among the Indians. During the years 1835 to 1844, all work of Christian churches was in eclipse in the Creek Nation, West. The Creek laws forbade Christian religious services, the bitter feeling against all churches and missions having arisen out of the troubles and difficulties experienced by the Creek people in their old homeland east of the Mississippi River before their removal to the Indian Territory.

In 1841, when the New Town Church was organized, Samuel Checote as a Methodist lay worker called and held the meeting secretly for anyone caught preaching the Christian religion was subject to penalty of a flogging of fifty lashes, under the law of the Creek

Council. Tradition has it that the year before he had been caught
twice holding Christian services in a river bottom canebrake, and
had been severely whipped both times by Creek officers. Christianity
spread and was soon accepted by many of the Creek people, other-
wise Checote would have been executed if caught preaching a third
time. In 1844, Samuel Checote pleaded his case before Chief Roly
McIntosh, and the law that made it a crime to preach the Christian
religion was abolished by order of the Creek chiefs and the National
Council.

Checote's service as a Methodist pastor began when he was
admitted from the Creek District to the Indian Mission Conference in
session at Clear Springs Camp Ground, Cherokee Nation, October
28, 1852, and continued to his death in 1884, except during his service
in the Confederate States Army as Lieutenant Colonel of the First
Regiment of Creek Mounted Volunteers, and during his three terms
as Principal Chief of the Creek Nation. In 1869, he was made a
presiding elder in the Indian Mission Conference, and in 1882, was
selected by the Methodist Episcopal Church South as delegate to
the Ecumenical Conference in London, England. His absorbing
interest throughout his life time was promotion of the Christian re-
ligion. As Principal Chief, gifted with high executive ability, Samuel
Checote furthered and preached education, agriculture, and Christi-
nanity for the advancement of the Creek people and a more perfect
system of their national government.

High tribute was paid this great Creek leader in the history of
Oklahoma during the celebration in 1949, at the New Town Church
which he had founded as a young man. His son, Martin Checote,
had followed him in the Methodist ministry; and, also, his grandson,
the Reverend Sam Checote, who is living at the the age of eighty-
three, one of the most beloved citizens in the Okmulgee vicinity. It
was during his pastorate at New Town Church, about 1901, that he
and members of the congregation erected the present church building
there, the original building of logs having been recently destroyed
by fire.

For the Reverend Sam Checote, the Centennial at New Town
Church was the crowning glory in remembrance of the Christian
lives of his forefathers and of the Creek people who were counted
in the congregation of the church during more than a century. He
was present for the three-day celebration, during which he was greeted
by throngs of visitors from over the country, among whom were mem-
bers of other church denominations, white people and Indians—Creeks,
Chocawas, Seminoles, Sac and Fox, and others. After the regular
morning and afternoon programs, they visited to reminisce and
renew old acquaintance and friendship. At noon, real feasts were
served in the camp houses over the grounds, the tables loaded with
food including some of the old time Indian dishes such as "sofky"
(boiled hominy) fresh from the camp fires.
The Centennial had the active interest and support of the Creek Indian Memorial Association of Okmulgee, through its President, Mr. James M. Noble, its Secretary, Mrs. Jean Risor, and members of its Board. It was largely through their efforts that funds were raised and plans promoted to assist the 120 members of the New Town Church in the celebration. Its success, however, fully justified the weeks of preliminary planning and of work contributed to this outstanding event in Oklahoma.

The high light of the Centennial centered in the program given at the church on the afternoon of the last day of the celebration, Sunday, September 25. It was then that this century old Indian Church was recognized by high dignitaries of the Methodist Church and other leaders from over Oklahoma who gathered to pay it tribute. Those who appeared on the afternoon’s program were Bishop W. Angie Smith of the Oklahoma-New Mexico Area, Methodist Church, which includes the Oklahoma Indian Mission Conference; Reverend D. D. Etchieson, Superintendent, Reverend Tony Hill, District Superintendent, and Reverend W. U. Witt, retired Superintendent, all of the Indian Mission Conference; Reverend W. W. Mansfield, Okmulgee Methodist Church; Lieutenant Governor James E. Berry, of the State of Oklahoma; Major W. T. Wheatley, Oklahoma City Air Material Area, Tinker Air Force Base; W. O. Roberts, Superintendent, Five Civilized Tribes Agency, Muskogee; and Miss Muriel H. Wright, Editorial Department, Oklahoma Historical Society. Also, appearing on the program, were the Reverend George Long, present pastor of the New Town Church, who reviewed its place in the history of Methodism in Oklahoma, and the Reverend Sam Checote, retired pastor, who gave his reminiscences, both addresses personally interesting to the members of the congregation and the throng of visitors that crowded the sanctuary for this memorable occasion. Every address was followed with the singing of old time hymns in the Creek language, by the many excellent native voices in the congregation. The whole program was recorded on a special recording machine for preservation by the Creek Indian Memorial Association, as a part of its archival material in the Museum of the old Creek capitol at Okmulgee.

In his fine address, specially prepared for the Centennial, Lieutenant Governor Berry paid tribute in this epigrammatic statement: “New Town Methodist Church was a pioneer in Oklahoma cultural life.”

Another speaker pointed out that the history of New Town Church is living history. The organization overcame great tribulation in its beginnings and has endured for more than a century nuturing the spirit of loyalty to Christian ideals and democratic traditions. The Centennial celebration brought in review the forces and the personalities that have made this locality worthy of remembrance in our state. Thousands of such localities in America, each with its living history, are what make our country great today.
The Times Believes --

One of last Creek Lighthorsemen

The death of the Rev. Samuel Checote, whose funeral will be held at New Town Church at 2 p.m. today, marks the severing of another of the few remaining links with the illustrious past of the Creek Nation.

The 83-year-old retired Indian preacher seemed to know a year ago that his time was fast approaching and there was one last thing he wanted to do.

Last September New Town Church held a centennial in honor of the Samuel Checote who was one of the greatest chiefs of his tribe, the grandfather of the man who will be buried today, and the founder of New Town Church.

That was a culmination of a dream of months before, Mr. Checote told those who gathered for the centennial.

"Last May," he said, "I had a vision of my grandfather urging me to do something, as time was growing short. I thought about it for a while and finally decided that when a fellow gets too-old to preach he can still be of some use."

It was then that the idea of the centennial celebration occurred to him and he put it over in spite of many discouragements and obstacles. It was his dream come true.

The man who will be honored in death today was reared by his grandfather and followed in his footsteps in the ministry. During his ministerial career he founded five churches. At one time he served as a circuit rider.

He began his education at Tallahassee Mission maintained northwest of Muskogee by the Presbyterian Church. The superintendent was E. W. Robertson, father of Miss Alice Robertson, who in later years was long postmaster of Muskogee and served one term in congress from the second congressional district, the only Republican ever to represent the district.

Mr. Checote was one of the few remaining former members of the Creek Lighthorse, the tribal police force. He was a link between the present and the days when white cattlemen had to pay the Creek government $1 a head for grazing their cows in the Nation.

Until a few years ago when ill health and advancing age somewhat impaired his memory of events of earlier years Mr. Checote was one of the few remaining men who recited Creek history from his own experiences and observations.

Mr. Checote was ready to go. He had lived a long, useful, and adventurous life. But he has been such a familiar figure for so many years that his memory will live in the hearts of his Indian and white friends as long as has that of his famous grandfather.

* * *
Funeral Service For Samuel Checote Set Saturday

Funeral service for the Rev. Samuel J. Checote, 83, retired Indian Methodist minister, will be conducted Saturday at 2 p.m. at the New Town church. The Rev. Willie Heney will officiate in Creek Indian language and the Rev. Richard Bruner will conduct the service in English.

Burial will be in the Okmulgee cemetery, under the direction of the Buchanan funeral home. The body will lie in state at the New Town church from Friday morning until funeral time Saturday.

Active pallbearers will be David Scott, Togo Berryhill, Martin Tarpelechee, Johnson Harjo, Solomon Kelly and Tom Washington.


Rev. Checote, who died in a Tahlequah Indian hospital, was the only superannuated Creek minister in this district. He entered Carlisle Military Academy in 1883.

His first charge was the Honey Creek circuit in 1903 and 1904. He was ordained deacon of the Indian Methodist church in 1910 and was ordained elder in 1914.

Rev. Checote who was once district superintendent of the church, is survived by one daughter, three sons, 10 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Your kindness and sympathy will always be held in grateful remembrance.
THE RECORD OF REMEMBRANCE

MEMBERS DECEASED 1950-1951.

The following servants of the Lord have "ceased from their labors and their works do follow them."

Ministers
S. J. Checote
C. L. Crippin
James Calvin Curry
Charles W. Lester

Wives and Widows
Mrs. R. T. Blackburn
Mrs. J. L. Brown
Mrs. M. L. Butler
Mrs. J. H. Farley
Mrs. T. J. Melton

Accepted Supply Pastor
Claudius C. Ticknor

Layman
James M. Snoddy

Memoirs

SAMUEL J. CHECOTE

Reverend Samuel J. Checote was born on October 19, 1867, near the town of Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Following the death of his mother, when he was six years old, he was reared in the home of his grandfather, Samuel Checote, the great pioneer Creek leader, whose name he bore.

Just what date he was granted a license to preach is not known, but his first appointment was to the pastorate of Honey Creek Circuit, Holdenville District, Indian Mission, in 1903-04. He was ordained Deacon in 1910 and Elder in 1914. He served as pastor in nearly all of the charges of the old Creek District and was District Superintendent (Presiding Elder) from 1920 to 1922. It is not known when he was admitted into membership in the Oklahoma Conference, (now the East Oklahoma Annual Conference), but he was a member for many years and was on the retired list of that conference at the time of his death. True to his convictions, he considered himself a local member of the New Town Church at Okmulgee, and did all he could to promote the local work. Although in delicate health, he served on the committee on arrangements for the Centennial Celebration of the founding of New Town Church.

Brother Checote received his education at Carlisle Military Academy, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and was a strong believer in the education of youth.

On Wednesday morning at 11:15, August 16, 1950, Brother Checote departed from this to a better world, being eighty-two years, nine months and 25 days old at the time of his death.

TONY HILL

JAMES CALVIN CURRY

James Calvin Curry was born November 18, 1882, in Laurens County, South Carolina, to Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Curry. He was one of twelve children. He was educated in the public schools of his home community, later attending a private school for boys in Nashville, Tennessee. He studied at Bethel Temple Conservatory in Chicago and also attended Moody Bible Institute there. After teaching for a brief time in Rose Hill, North Carolina, he entered the evangelistic field as singer, travelling in almost every state in the United States.

While assisting in a revival meeting in Tulsa he met Miss Mabel Archer and they were married in Tulsa, June 7, 1911. To this union were born five children, four daughters and one son. The daughters are Miss Catherine Curry, Tulsa, Mrs.
Rev. Samuel J. Cheseb at the Centennial Celebration 9-24-1949
100 yr. Celebration of Ministry
Guest at New Town Church (Indian Methodist)
09-24-1949
and at New Town Church/Creek Council House
Wait for the LORD

Rejoice in the Word

...there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.

I am the Way, the Truth & the Life

And now these three remain: Faith, Hope & Love. But the greatest of these is...
Oklahoma
Indian
Missionary
Conference
150 years Celebration
Newtown United Methodist

Indian Church

166 Years

Of

Ministry

Historical Home Coming
1. Precious mem'ries, un-seen an-gels, Sent from some-where to my soul;
2. Precious fa-ther, lov-ing moth-er, Fly a-cross the long-ly years,
3. In the still-ness of the mid-night, Ech-oes from the past I hear;
4. I re-mem-ber moth-er pray-ing, Fa-ther, too, on bend-ed knee;
5. As I travel on life's path-way, Kow not what the years may hold,

How they lin-ger, ev-er near me, And the sa-cred past un-fold.
And old home scenes of my child-hood, In fond mem-ory ap-pear.
Old-time sing-ing, glad-ness bring-ing, From that love-ly land some-where.
Sun is sink-ing, shad-ows fall-ing, But their pray'rs still fol-low me.
As I pon-der, hope grows for-der, Precious mem'ries flood my soul.

Chorus

Precious mem'ries, how they lin-ger, How they ev-er flood my soul,

In the still-ness of the mid-night, Precious, sa-cred scenes un-fold.
Benediction
Creek Dismissal Hymn
Holy Communion
Invitational Hymn #382

Prayer
Creek Hymn

Other Remarks
J. Freeman
C. Cox

H. Gibson

R. Derenay/Bell

F. Green

C. Berthille

T. Fields

E. Miller

S. Hayes

D. Steen/K. Scott

S. Checota

Recognition of Families by Camps:
Creek Hymn
Recognition of Former Pastors
Hymn - "Precious Memories"
Brief History of Newtown United Methodist Church
Prayer - Rev. Harry Long
Creek Hymn - Rev. Alfred Berthill
1:30 p.m. Welcome - Mrs. Cogee Long

Afternoon Program

10:45 a.m. Opening Hymn #334
"A Day of Remembrance"
October 1, 2006
Parsonage: 918-756-5658
Pastor H. June Thomas

NEWTOWN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. David Long, Jr. (Men)
Rev. Joe Lowe, Jr. (Women)
Farewell Handshakes:

Hymn # 171
There's Nothing About That Name
Hymn # 66
Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow
Hymn # 156
The Giving of Our Tithes & Offerings & Offering Prayer
Hymn # 600
Wonderful Words of Life

1:45 p.m. After Pentecost - Green

Creek Hymn - John R. Burrell
Announcements: Lunch will be served right after services
166-Year Celebration at
New Town Indian United Methodist Church

On September 30 through October 1, 2006, New Town Indian United Methodist church celebrated 166 years of ministry. Many people contributed to the success of this large undertaking. Families linked to New Town church for the past 166 years collected photos, banners, stories and videos regarding the historic significance of the church. History has recorded New Town church started 1840 only 10 years after the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the “Trail of Tears”. This is how the Five Civilized Tribes came to be in Oklahoma Indian Territory. Members of the church, relatives, conference staff and friends gathered together to remember the past of New Town and to look toward the future of our Native and Christian heritage.

The first celebration in 1949 had its inception from a dream my grandfather, Rev. Samuel J. Checote had. In the dream his grandfather, Chief Samuel Checote, asked him to commemorate an anniversary event at New Town Church. I read a newspaper account from 1949 telling about the dream and the event. I realize that the church needed to have just this kind of celebration once more to commemorate almost 200 years. The first celebration in 1949 was the churches 109th year anniversary, so this would be a 166 year anniversary. I also had a dream from my grandfather, Rev. Samuel J. Checote, asking me to help start another commemoration of the site at New Town. I made a call to my Aunt Mary Ann Checote-Kane telling her about my vision and dream. She contacted others to see how they could join in bring this vision into a reality. A committee was formed and everyone began the work making this “dream” come true, a 166-year celebration at New Town Church. What an exciting project.
Bobby Hardridge drew a layout of how the camp houses had been. Coggie Long and Linda Cusher gave guidance to this and a drawing was made to show everyone how the camps houses looked, but more importantly who the families were at each camp. Many families were connected to the camp houses; all of us really valued this part of the celebration. The church committee organized the program and who would be the speakers for that day. The program went together wonderfully. The “dream’s vision” to commemorate and celebrate the church was well on its way to become a reality. I sent a folder with newspaper articles and information I had that might be helpful. I live in Tennessee so I wanted to help in whatever way I could. The planning for a 166 Home Coming of New Town church was started.

My father, Gideon Don Checote, came with two of my nieces, Kara and Keely, from Pennsylvania. My sister, Doretta Checote, from Texas, two of my children Nathan Eads from North Carolina, Rachel Eads Blum, and my little grandson, Brandon Blum, came with me from Tennessee. This was a very wonderful time for us all to unite with our heritage and family roots in Oklahoma. Our contribution for the celebration was to make church banners and any other duties my aunt had for us to do, we were all willing to help out.

A morning church service started the day’s event. Second Chief Alfred Berryhill spoke, telling the story about his grandfather being born at the Checote camp house. Second Chief told how Rev. Martin L. Checote give a witness statement that the baby was Creek and was born there at New Town church at the Checote camp house. Second Chief went
on to say that New Town Church was the “mother” church. This was one of many good stories told that day. We all had a family link and we could feel the presence of a “host of witnesses” viewing the activity once more at New Town Church. Second Chief Berryhill said some of us might think “this will be the last time we may see each other, but a host of witness were there and we would always be there encouraging the people on ward”. He then began a Muscogee hymn “Espoketis Omes Kerresko”, “It might be the last Time”. I was standing in the back of the church, holding my grandson as the song rang out tears began to roll down my face, as I was touched with remembrance of all the many years the church had served the people. It seemed to me that others were moved as well, for a box of kleenexes was passed around the room. The tears gave remembrance of a thankful praying people; our home church was in all of our hearts. The motto from the Epworth league had been “Onward and Upward our Steadfast” so we were in remembrance of that motto.

Many attended the celebration and I recall people just kept coming through the doors. For those who could not find a seat, they stood around the back as the church filled to maximum capacity. The church community sang the songs of old in Muscogee language and some in English. Communion was served to all with rejoicing and prayerful praise; the blessings flowed over the congregation.

The oldest member of the Muscogee “Creek” Nation, Mrs. Martha Berryhill, was in attendance. She was one of the early workers for the Lord at New Town Church and did many good deeds for those in the community and congregation. I recall her jumping up
saying out "Oh, Praise the Lord" as she felt the Holy Spirit moving among the gathered. Her age was about 106 on that day. She came into the church carrying her walker as she walked. Her daughter Ruby Haynes Mauk came with her. My dad really loved talking to Mrs. Berryhill. He had been good friends and school mate with her son Joe. Another elder of the church was Thomas Washington. My dad brought him to the service that morning. I remember my dad helping this dear man into the church and then offering him a seat next to the door in the back of the church so he would not have to walk so far. Mr. Washington always sat in the front pew, so he passed by my dad and found his place in the front roll of the church. I recall my father’s nephew’s wife, Juanita Checotah, an elder, who had enjoyed viewing the video of the old church and its members. She replayed the video three or four times that day telling us “I am just going to go see that video one more time”.

The ladies provided a large meal for everyone. This was a wonderful time eating and sharing together. Lots of pictures were taken of my own family as well as those who were gathered. There were many memories of the happy years of New Town Church. After our meal the second part of the day’s events started with Rev. Harry Long speaking. The District Superintended and the Pastor of New Town then addressed the congregation. Rev. Harry Long asked each family to stand up as their family camp house was noted. What a proud day to have had the opportunity to be there and be counted in the families.
I had to go outside during some of the afternoon service. My little grandson, Brandon, was an active 2 year old and needed to run off some of his energy. Other young boys had also gathered outside to play in the warm fall day. They ran and played being sweet to each other and encouraging to my two year old. As I looked out into the large grounds with the big shaded oak trees, I began to think about how wonderful it was that my little Tennessee grandson, Brandon, could be here as part of the little ones of New Town. I looked up into the blue sky and said a prayer, “Grandfather, can you see this little great grandbaby of yours playing here at New Town”? Yes I know that was once again a time to remember the saints of old, their contribution to the service and praises to the Lord.

Our day ended with the “Creek” dismissal. Rev. Joe Lowe led the women following the men as they went out of the church. We all sang Muscogee hymn as each of us entered the procession. My mother, Rosalie Laxton, was beside me as we joined the procession. She was on portable oxygen so I helped her come down the steps to fall in line with the circle. The men formed the outer circle and the woman came around the inner circle, all of us shaking hands until we had given that hand shake to everyone. Then Rev. David Long gave the closing words and prayer. I will never forget this day as long as I live. Renewal had taken place in all our hearts.

Respectfully Given,

Melba Checote-Eads

01-30-2011
Melba Checote Eads with Odette Freeman
and her daughter Hilly
Oct 1, 2006
2nd Chief of the Muscogee Nation Alfred Berryhill
Mary Ann Lane at 166 Celebration at

Mullin Cherokee Eats with Odessa Freeman
with her daughter Kiley Oct 1, 2006.

At the 166 Year Celebration of New Town Church
Oct 1, 2006
Dun Cherokee Martin Berryhill Ruby News
Rachel Eads Blum, granddaughter
Doretha Chelette, Mary Ann Chelette, Kansas
Mellie Chelette-Eads
05/15/86
Bart Kelly  Oct 1, 2012
Melba Cheete-Edwards grandson Brandon Blum

Donette Cheete
Bart Kelly  Oct 1, 2012