

## CHOCTAW TRIBAL GOVERNANCE OUTLINE

### RE: INDIAN CLAIMS COMMISSION ACT FILING PERIOD, 1946-1951

1945 01 08 *Congressional Record*

Mr. Stigler introduced H.R. 1198 in the U.S. House of Representatives, a bill “to create an Indian Claims Commission, to provide for the powers, duties, and functions thereof, and for other purposes...”

*William Grady Stigler was a Choctaw tribal member who had previously served as the Choctaw National Attorney. A Democrat, he was elected to Congress in 1944 and served in the House until his death in 1952.*

1946 01 11 C-3885

Choctaw National Attorney Ben Dwight to CIA, requesting authority for National Attorney and Principal Chief, at request of Chief, to travel to Washington to lobby for the Indian Claims Commission bill. *Congressman W.G. Stigler had informed Chief Durant and Dwight on January 7, 1946 that the bill would come before the House Indian Affairs Committee on January 14, 1946.*

1946 02 18 C-4541

Choctaw Mining Trustee Hampton Tucker to Choctaw Principal Chief stating he has had letters supporting ICC legislation sent to Congressman Stewart. *Tucker, a Choctaw tribal member, had previously filed several tribal suits before the U.S. Court of Claims while serving as Choctaw National Attorney.*

1946 02 22 C-4540

Congressman Paul Stewart to Choctaw Mining Trustee Tucker acknowledging the Mining Trustee's letter supporting ICC legislation and stating he has been busy promoting this bill.

1946 03 19 C.5531

Choctaw Advisory Council met at Tuskahoma. National Attorney Dwight informed the Council on the status of the ICC bill. He stated that Rep. Stigler had done much to support the bill and recommended that the Council pass a resolution in support of the legislation.

1946 03 19 C-3990.2

Resolution Adopted at a Meeting of Choctaw Indians at Oklahoma City, endorsing James H. Belvin as Principal Chief, that officials take aggressive action to complete the sale of the coal and asphalt lands, and endorsing the Claims Commission bill. *The Council resolved “That we endorse the Claims Commission bill sponsored by the Hon. William Stigler, and urge its final passage by the U.S. Congress.”*

1946 03 19 C-3990.1

John J. Underwood sent a copy of the above resolution to U.S. Senator Elmer Thomas of Oklahoma.

1946 04 16 C-5533

Muriel Wright, secretary of the Choctaw Advisory Council sent a copy of the above resolution to A. M. Landman, Supt. Of the Five Civilized Tribes Agency, OIA.

1946 06 30 C-3772

Tribal attorney Ben Dwight submits annual report to CIA, includes expense account for services, including lobbying for the ICC bill.

**1946 08 13**

**Indian Claims Commission Act becomes Public Law 726, 60 Stat. 1049. Section 12 establishes a filing deadline of “ five years after the date of approval of the Act” (August 13, 1951).**

**1947 06 00 C-3301**

**ICC Commission's explanation of the ICC Act, sent to all tribal leaders in 1947 as per requirement of the statute.**

**1947 06 11 C-3299**

**ICC Commission to Chickasaw Governor Maytubby notifying the Chickasaw Tribe of the ICC, emphasizes Section 15 of the ICC Act, states that ICC rules of procedure will be sent when they are finalized. Also enclosed is the Commission's explanation of the ICC (C-3301).**

**1947 06 11 C-3300**

**CC Commission to Choctaw Principal Chief Durant notifying the Choctaw Tribe of the ICC, emphasizes Section 15 of the ICC Act, states that ICC rules of procedure will be sent when they are finalized. Also enclosed is the Commission's explanation of the ICC (C-3301).**

1949 10 25 C-4631

On behalf of the Choctaw Nation, attorneys Grady Lewis, W.F. Semple, and H.L. Fitzgerald petitioned the ICC for judgment to recover tribal funds wrongfully expended on non-member Indians. **This was the first of several claims the Nation filed before the ICC. These claims will be described in a separate report.**

*Lewis and Semple were both Choctaw tribal members. They had long served as tribal attorneys and Semple also served a term as the Choctaw Principal Chief between 1918-1922. The Choctaw Principal Chief and the Commissioner of Indian Affairs approved the contracts for all the legal services of all three attorneys.*

1950 00 00 C-3558

Supt Five Civilized Tribes to CIA, transmitting a proposed attorney contract between Choctaw Principal Chief and WF Semple and Grady Lewis to pursue all claims. Urges immediate approval in light of several filings these attorneys desire to make.

1950 03 21 C-5194

Choctaw Principal Chief to Muskogee AD, enclosing a copy of a letter to Choctaw Attorney Semple regarding the 1951 08 12 deadline for filing ICC claims.

1950 03 21 C-5194.1

Choctaw Principal Chief to Choctaw Attorney Semple, thanking Semple for keeping him informed on progress of suits and re-emphasizing his desire to have all ICC claims filed by 1951 08 12 deadline.

1950 08 28 C-5198

Choctaw Principal Chief to Muskogee AD, enclosing five copies of a contract between Chief and Grady Lewis to represent tribe in ICC case involving lands West of the 100th Meridian.

#### **1950 09 01**

**An Act to Authorize the Commutation of the Annual Appropriation for Fulfilling Various Treaties with the Choctaw Nation of Indians in Oklahoma, and For Other Purposes. Public Law 747, 64 Stat. 573. This statute provided for the payment of \$350,666.67 to fulfill unpaid obligations arising out of treaties in 1805, 1820, 1825, and 1855. Payment was made contingent upon approval of a majority of enrolled members in a referendum conducted by the Secretary of the Interior.**

*This statute demonstrated that the existing Choctaw tribal government was not only capable of pursuing claims before the ICC during this period, but also able to successfully obtain compensation for historical claims through legislation.*

*Representative William F. Stigler, a Choctaw tribal member and the sponsor of the Indian Claims Commission Act of 1946, introduced the bill providing for this legislation (H.R. 6209).*

1950 09 23

Grady Lewis to Choctaw Principal Chief, explaining his desire for a separate attorney's contract for the Leased District case, which he had been "sole attorney for the Tribe in that case since 1931."

1950 09 29 C-5195

Choctaw Principal Chief to Muskogee AD, enclosing a letter from Grady Lewis explaining his desire for a separate contract in order to prosecute claim of land west of the 100th Meridian, and recommending approval of this contract.

1950 11 29 C-3779

Memo from Chief, Branch of Land, to CIA, enclosing attorney contract between Choctaw Nation and Grady Lewis for ICC case and recommending approval.

1951 01 15 C-3503

Choctaw Principal Chief to ICC recommending "the fee that should be his" in compensation to Grady Lewis, attny for the Choctaw Nation in Docket 16 (Leased District), decided in favor of the Choctaw Nation.

**1951 08 13 Statutory Closing Date for Filing of Claims before the ICC.**