

DAVID FOLSOM

David Folsom, the Choctaw Indian, belongs to the southern branch of the Folsom family, which came to New England in 1636, from Hingham, England. David's father, Nathaniel Folsom, was a trader among the Choctaws, in Mississippi, for over thirty years, having gone to that part of the country when quite a young man. It was in this southern state that he married Ai-ni-chi-ho-yo (one to be preferred above others) who was a direct descendant from a long and ancient line of chiefs of the Ahe-patokla or royal clan.

At the time David was born, his father was in New Orleans, Louisiana, buying goods for his store. His mother went to stay during that time with her mother while her husband was away, and be near a doctor, who was an Indian and related to the family. A few days before David was born, an older brother and sister died from pneumonia and his mother was suffering with the same malady at the time David made his advent into the world, January 25, 1791.

It was a peculiar custom of the full-bloods that when a baby was born under conditions which they thought were such that the baby could not be well taken care of, the child was destroyed. It seems that the doctor said he did not think the mother would live to raise the child and something must be done. His grandmother, hearing the conversation, determined the fine baby should live, and took it and ran away with it. Thus the child's life was saved. A month later, Nathaniel Folsom returned and he and his wife went back to their home with the new son.

When David was about seven years old, his sister Molly married a United States Indian Agent, by the name of Samuel Mitchell. He was well educated and took quite a fancy to little David. He induced his father to let the young boy live with them for a while to be company for his sister and also learn to speak the English language.

After three years, the sister died and David returned to his home. He had learned to speak very good En-

glish and had been taught many useful things. The Indian Commissioners liked him very much for to them he was a most unusual lad even at that age. He was ever on the alert to please the officers and always in a good humor. He was musically inclined and showed talent to a marked degree. He made himself a violin and played well on it, so the officers at the agency said.

A number of years went by and David worked hard, doing whatever his father had for him to do. If nothing else was to be done, he would go into the woods and chop logs. At this time his home was on Pigeon Roost Creek, on the Natchez Trail. When he was old enough to raise a crop himself, he sold it and was enabled to go to school again. He bought a horse, some clothes and had about twenty dollars left. Then this ambitious boy, at the age of sixteen, started off alone to go 250 miles to a school on Elk River, in the state of Tennessee. He was there only six months, during which time his father sent him fifty dollars, which was all the assistance he received. His circumstances were such that he could not do more for David, so he returned home. His family was well pleased with his progress which to them was wonderful. He was old enough to appreciate his opportunities and had embraced them to the utmost. A little later, David's father employed a man to teach him for a month. During that time, James Allen, a Chickasaw, was a guest in the Folsom home. He saw how readily David learned and told him if he would go and stay a month with him, he would teach him free of charge. The offer was gladly accepted. That was the last instruction he had.

David had learned the trading business from his father, and it was natural that he should take up this occupation. David was a success from the first. His father said that it was his industry and his honesty that brought him what he had accumulated. Besides this, he was kind to everybody and obedient to his father and mother.

David married Rhoda Nail, a half-blood Choctaw woman. He took her to a magistrate and they were married according to law. Until that time, the Indians were married according to tribal customs. Their home was a very hospitable one. David had kept up his playing on the

violin and often a merry crowd was there to enjoy the music and dancing.

For three years, David Folsom was in the Indian wars and assisted General Andrew Jackson in taking Pensacola. When he was mustered out of military service, he had won the rank of colonel.

Letters from missionaries, published in the *Missionary Herald*, Boston, Massachusetts, in 1818, state that David Folsom was one of the first Choctaws to ask for schools to be established among his people. As the result of David Folsom's request, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury and Mr. L. S. Williams left the settlement of Brainerd, Tennessee, in the Cherokee country, in May, 1818, and arrived in the Choctaw Nation in August of the same year. They named the new station Elliott in memory of the Apostle of the American Indian.

The missionaries exercised a great influence over the life of David. He went about talking to the people of his tribe, informing them of the wonderful advantages that had come to them and telling them that they must be kind and helpful to the servants of God. From that time on, David Folsom was a wonderfully influential man among his people. He would make talks both at the meetings of the church and schools. It was said that he was a very forceful and eloquent speaker. The missionaries often made his home their headquarters in order that they might get all the help they could in translating the books of the Bible into the Choctaw language. David Folsom was anxious that as large a portion of the Scriptures should be printed in the Choctaw language as might be practicable. A great deal of time was given to revising and translating the books which were to be prepared for the schools. Rev. Cyrus Byington and Rev. Alfred Wright, the teacher, preacher and doctor, were among the missionaries who assisted in this work.

When the schools first opened, the Indians themselves manifested the deepest interest. By June, 1822, the schools were a wonderful reality. The *Missionary Herald*, of December, 1822, published in full a talk made by David Folsom at one of the schools, in which he said "The various societies of the North have graciously sent you garments with which you are clothed and most of the good things which

you enjoy came through the bounty of these good people who never saw you. To the missionaries who, for your good, have done and are doing so much, you owe a great obligation. You should obediently submit to all the rules of the school. You should strive to the utmost to acquire the manners, the knowledge and language of the missionaries. It is true your fathers have long possessed this land, notwithstanding their ignorance of these things, but this you cannot be expected to do unless you become civilized. Your situation is rapidly becoming different from the situation of those who have gone before you. The white people were once at so great a distance that there was but little intercourse between them and your forefathers. Now the white people are settled around you in every direction. It is therefore indispensably necessary that the rising generation shall be educated and learn the ways of the white people. Some of the same religious family by whom you are here taught, have taken two youths from this Nation, Israel and McKee Folsom, and have given them an education. In a few months more we hope you will see them return to this Nation; and in them, it is believed, you will see a convincing proof of the utility of a good education. The land in which these young men are receiving their education is the one in which the missionaries were born and instructed. The missionaries came not only to teach you to read and write, but to cultivate the ground and to do various mechanical works. The time has come when you should give the most diligent attention to these things and make great effort to attain them. Should you wisely improve the privileges you now enjoy, the period will soon arrive when you will be considered by the councilors, in short, the glory of your country. The girls can also acquire an education and learn to manage domestic affairs as the white people do. When they are grown and their education finished they will marry young men who are refined like themselves."

From this talk on education by David Folsom, one can easily glimpse the vision of the man who was worthy to be a great leader of his people and was destined to be among the outstanding men of his tribe and family. To him, education was the hope of the Nation. He realized that it was the coming generations which would be the ones to wield

the greatest influence and they should be prepared to meet the new conditions as soon as possible.

David Folsom was the main one who was instrumental in sending his two younger brothers, McKee and Israel Folsom, away to school. They remained four years at Cornwall, Connecticut, without returning home during vacations. These young men were a wonderful help to the missionaries in the work of translating books for both church and schools. It was Israel who first translated the Lord's Prayer into the Choctaw language.

As can well be imagined, books were very scarce there at that time. David Folsom made out a list of books, with the assistance of his brothers, which was sent to Boston to be purchased. No doubt these were the first books bought and shipped to that part of the country by any one except the missionaries. They were certainly the nucleus of the first Indian library. As an index of the character of books ordered, the complete list is given: "Encyclopedia bound in calf, last American edition, if no American edition has been published within six or eight years, then the Edinburgh edition; Scott's Family Bible (quarto) with the marginal references and the maps designed to accompany it; Morse's or Worcester's Universal Gazetteer; Jenk's Devotion; Dordridge's Rise and Progress; Baxter's Saint's Rest, and Call to the Unconverted; Dwight's Theology; Watts on the Mind; Mason on Self-Knowledge; Burder's Village Sermons, 3 Vols.; J. Burder's Sermons for Children; Scougal's Life of God in the Soul; Babington on Education; Life of Brainerd, by Rev. S. E. Dwight of Boston; Life of Obookiah; Brown's or Winslow's History of Missions; and Milner's Church History." The resolution to obtain so costly a library must have been prompted by enlarged and liberal views.

To demonstrate the tender affection and deep sympathy of Colonel Folsom, whom the missionaries considered self-taught, a letter is copied in the *Missionary Herald*, of September, 1822, to Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, after the death of his wife.

"Dear Sir:

Yours of the 16th, Inst. was received with much sor-riness. I do not know what to say to you that would give you some relief in the day of your affliction, I can only say

in a few words that I am indeed sorry, and do feel that I have lost one of my best friends.

The Choctaws have lost a great friend, who did promote their best good, the school children are left motherless—what shall our children do when they go back to the school. However, we must not be discouraged—My good friend, I hope you do feel happy at times that you are still in the land of living and that good God has given you so many days to labour for him in this dark benighted land. It is God that has taken your dear beloved wife from you.

He did see best that she should not stay no longer with us. She is gone and gone never to return to teach the poor Choctaws. Her labor is finished here on earth—and she is gone to her father's house, which is in heaven. The same blessed God has thought best to keep you here longer—the work he has desire for you to do, you have not complete them yet. God knows all things best. Your brothers and sisters have left you for the other world since you have come among the Choctaws to teach them the way of hollyness. But your life is still spared.

Now my dear friend this good being has brote this tryal of sorriness on you to see whether the servant K is true to him or not, here we know and have witness the kind and love and her acive and have done everything she was able, indeed she was our mother and the mother of our children, but God was able (had a right) to take her from us. And therefore I can only say to you, the days of man is but shorte, and all things must be done quick.

I hope you are not discourage, there is to be more school and churches must be built. The gospel must be preach to these people, whether these people receive the gospel or not, it is your duty to do your fathers work.

The Choctaws who did not become acquainted with Mrs. K. do not know the great affliction has befallen on our school. But I know many of us, we ought to humble for the loss of our mother and teacher. It must be more trial to you a while you have your motherless children in your arm. But we will notice one thing. We read in the Bible, the same God who has seen best to take our mother from us, did command his servant Abraham to offer his only son on the sacrifice—God did try our father Abraham, and I can only say he has tried you also—I hope this same God has seen you humble before him, and give yourself up to him to dispose of you as he sees best. And that you will go forth with more zeal in up building Zion in this land more than you ever did—Please to receive this as coming from a person who share the sorry with you.—Your friend,

DAVID FOLSOM."

The missionaries considered David Folsom the first lay

missionary of the Choctaws. In a letter written by Rev. Alfred Wright, dated February, 1822, he states that a company of Choctaws settled near Colonel Folsom. For many years they had no fixed residence; and were made up of different clans and districts in the Nation, and were not receiving any part of the annuity which was paid by the United States. Soon David Folsom advised them to select a place where they could settle compactly and permanently, advised them to quit drinking whiskey, and to cultivate the soil; telling them that if they acceded to his proposal, he would use his influence to procure for them their proportion of the annuity. He gave them some account of the object of the missionaries. They appeared pleased, and expressed a desire to hear them preach. Soon a request was sent for Colonel Folsom to come and bring with him one of the missionaries that they might hear about the Great Spirit.

David Folsom was a very versatile man and enthused over anything that looked to the promotion of his people. Early missionary letters give him credit for assisting them in opening a wagon road from Elliott to Pigeon Roost on the road from Nashville to the Natchez, thereby making a wagon communication from the navigable waters of the Yazoo to those of the Tombigbee.

Early in June, 1829, David Folsom and three brothers, Isaac, Samuel and John, united with the church. The record has been left that a council was held that fall, consisting of Colonel Folsom, the principal chief of the southern district, and the subordinate chiefs and warriors from both districts near Yok-nok-cha-ya, which lasted for two or three days. When public business was through for the day, religious worship was held at night; and often when the council adjourned during the day, the serious people assembled in some retired place for devotional exercises.

In the memoirs of Nathaniel Folsom, he tells with much feeling of hearing his son David pray for the first time in public in the Choctaw language. It was at a large meeting held at Hebron, right near a large hickory tree, under which fifty years before he had pitched his tent when hunting for wild game in the same woods.

Mrs. Mosley, the widow of Rev. Samuel Mosley, who

died within the year of his first missionary labors among the Choctaws, spent some time in the family of Chief Folsom, where she taught a small school. By this time he was the highest chief of the Choctaws. When she returned to her home in New England, she had a number of letters from him. To her he expressed a great desire to have a school where females could be fitted to become teachers and gave it as his opinion that one or two religious Choctaws might now go out as teachers. He told of the advantages, which he possessed as ruler, for sending the Gospel abroad in the Nation. He also said, "If we do these things in sincerity and love of God, he will surely bless our endeavors." In one of his letters, he informed her of having joined the church with his three brothers, and further said "Here is the work of God's love, as I trust God was preparing us to rejoice more still. Mrs. Folsom, her sister and mother, and my own mother and sister with multitudes of others came out on the Lord's side and united with the church. The like we never witnessed among us before, it seemed a miracle God had wrought with his Holy Spirit."

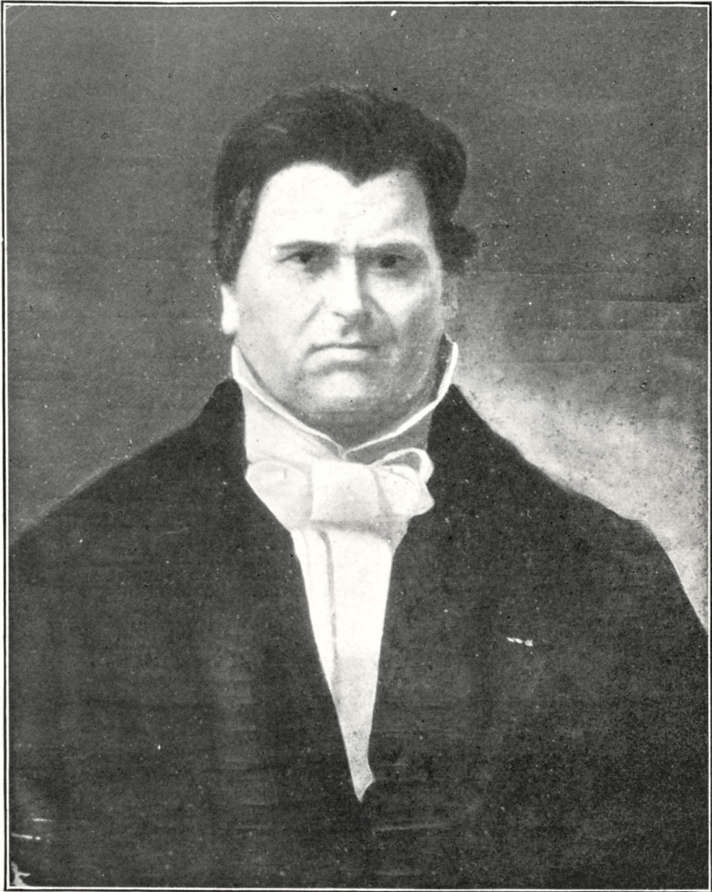
David Folsom served his people as Chief for a number of years and as a delegate to Washington in their behalf at different times. He was a contemporary of the noted Chief Pushmataha and was with him when he died, December 24, 1824. In a letter to his brothers in Mississippi, he stated: "Pushmataha was sick only a short time. Many strangers called to see him, among them General Jackson, to whom his last words were addressed: 'When I am dead let the big guns be fired over me.' We were at a loss to know how to proceed with his burial, but the Government took charge of it. He was buried with military honors of war. Several military companies turned out, as well as the marines from the Navy Yard and two bands of music. It was a great procession. We took the body of our departed Chief, in the presence of several thousand people, to the burial grounds. He was laid in the grave. The minister prayed for us. When it was over we left him in the midst of many hundred people. I assure you, my dear brothers, I am thankful there was so much honor paid to our departed chief. Many congressmen, as well as General Jackson, treated us with the greatest kindness. I can truly say that we have received every

mark of friendship and brotherly love from the white people since we have been among them. Pushmataha was conscious up to the last moment and occasionally conversed with friends around him. It was sad to hear him say, 'As you go home you will see beautiful flowers and hear the birds singing in the trees—but Pushmataha will see and hear them no more. When you go to our people, they will ask where is Pushmataha, and you will answer he is no more. They will hear it as the fall of a mighty oak on a still day in the midst of the forest.' ”

At a council meeting held by the Choctaws in July, 1827, Colonel Ward, the United States Agent for the Choctaw Nation, came in with an interpreter to present a communication from the President of the United States, relative to the removal of the Indians to some place west of the Mississippi River. Colonel Folsom addressed him, recognizing, in the following tender manner, the friendship in which they had co-operated with the whites in time of war.

“Sir, it has pleased the Great Spirit that the beloved men of two council fires should meet and sit together under this White House. We salute Colonel Ward, as the messenger of our great father. Our first great father, General Washington, loved all his white children and all his red children. He always gave us good counsel. We loved his words. Our great fathers who succeeded him have given us good counsel. We have loved their counsel and followed it. We have begun to increase a little in knowledge and industry. We were always friends to the American people. We have lived in peace with them. Our chain of friendship has never been broken nor has it grown rusty. When they told us they had an enemy and wished our help, poor and weak as we were, we assembled our warriors and went forth to battle. We were true friends to them—we have lived under the wing of our great father. We still wish to live there.”

To appreciate Colonel Folsom's speech, it should be mentioned the letter of communication stated that the unwillingness of the Indians to remove from the land of their fathers was due to the influence of white men settled among them; and then stated what, in the opinion of the President, would be the advantages of a removal; and that in case



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the Choctaws would not remove, the President did not consider himself as having the constitutional power to protect them in their independence, or to prevent their becoming subject to the laws of the state of Mississippi.

Colonel Folsom asked if either the chiefs or the Christian people of the Nation had used any influence to obtain the letter, to which Colonel Ward answered that they had not so far as he knew and the letter expressed the thought of the President himself. Then Colonel Folsom said that he had asked the question for the purpose of satisfying the minds of the people in the council house, and not his own.

The three highest chiefs were sons of intermarried white men. Although elevated to their standing by great majorities and strongly supported in their attempts to promote civilization, yet they had their rivals among the full-blood Choctaws who would make great use of any detected agency on the part of these chiefs or any white man, to bring any argument to bear upon the Government for a removal. This thought was to be made clear in the minds of all by Colonel Folsom, as to the chiefs especially.

A request by Colonel Ward was made for a written answer before the Council dispersed. Colonel Ward preferred not to give an answer until the subject could be discussed by a fuller Council, but he would give a verbal temporary answer.

When David Folsom arose to speak there was rapt attention. He had always been considered a powerful speaker in his native language. He said, "Two or three days since a talk, which came from the White House, was delivered to us. We sat and heard it. It came from our Great Father. He says that he has heard that there are bad white men among us who prevent our moving to the west of the Mississippi by their bad counsel. We do not know that it is so. There are old men residing among us, who have married Choctaw women. They take no part in our councils. They have no concern in them. There are some white men who sit near the edge of our country, who steal our horses and cattle and hogs, who lay whiskey there. It may be that they have said something to prevent our removing to the West, which has been reported to our Great Father. We do not know. Here sits Colonel Ward, the white man king.

If we discover them, we will tell him. If he needs help, we, the chiefs, captains and warriors will help him to remove them. Concerning the good white men among us, for whom Colonel Ward will make a letter, we have nothing to say. We do not wish to sell our land and remove. This land our Great Father above gave us. We stand on it. We stood on it before the white man came to the edge of the American land. It belongs to no one in any place but to ourselves. Our land is not borrowed land. White men came and sat down here and there, and all around us. When they wished to buy land of us, we have had counsels together. The white man always said, "The land is yours." We have always been true friends to the American people. We have lived in friendship. Although it has always been thus, now a different talk is sent to us. We are told that the King of Mississippi is about to extend his laws over us. We are distressed. Our hands are not strong; we are a small people; we do not know much. The King of Mississippi has strong arms, many warriors, and much knowledge. He is about to lay his laws upon us.

"Colonel Ward knows that we have just begun to build new houses, and make new fields, and to purchase iron, and set up blacksmith shops with our annuity. We have begun to make axes, hoes, and plows. We have some schools. We have begun to learn and we have just begun to rise and go. And our Great Father, who sits in the White House says to us, 'Unless you go yonder, the white man will extend his laws over you.' We think his words are true; and we respect them as sacred. But we are distressed. Oh, that our Great Father would love us. Oh, that Colonel Ward would love us. Oh, that the King of Mississippi would love us.

"The American people say that they love liberty. They talk much about it. They boast of their own liberty. Why will they take it from the red man? They say they will make none slaves. We think our Great Father is true and good; and will not himself lay laws upon us. Here we wish to live. But whatever the white man wishes to do with us, he will do. If he will us to go, we shall go."

Colonel Folsom was familiar with all the past treaties between the United States Government and the Choctaws. It was no wonder he was stirred to make the speech he did.

He knew the Choctaws lived upon the land, which they received from their ancestors, the limits of which were perfectly defined by treaties.

In every treaty the Choctaws were considered as having a right to their country and as exercising sovereignty over it. In a treaty negotiated by General Jackson and General Hinds, in 1829, it was stated, "That it was desirable to the State of Mississippi to obtain a small part of the land belonging to said Nation." On this account the southern part of the Choctaw country was ceded to the United States for a large tract of land beyond the Mississippi River with an annual sum of money as additional compensation.

It was expected that such Choctaws, who would prefer the life of a hunter, would remove beyond the Mississippi. But few removed. It appeared that the people preferred to remain on the land of their fathers. They were of the opinion that they were to remain in the Choctaw Nation, as originally, under laws of their own and not under the laws of any state.

Of course the laws of the several states, or of the United States, could not be extended over the Indians unless by operation of a treaty made with their consent. Some of the states had already enacted laws which declared that no Indian or descendant of an Indian would be admitted as a witness in any court of justice. This was a sufficient specimen of the kind of legislation which would be enacted respecting Indians if they were brought under the laws of the states.

With the knowledge of the situation and conditions that faced Colonel Folsom, then Principal Chief of the Choctaws, his heart must have been torn with many conflicting emotions. He regarded the extension of the laws of Mississippi over the Choctaws as a great calamity; and as neither more nor less than reducing the Indians to slavery. In making the laws, which would have an effect on all their dearest interests, the Choctaws would have no influence. They would have no tribunal before which they might take their treatment of the Indians by the whites of injustice or vexation. How could the Choctaws be sure the laws would not be framed with a special view of expelling them from the state? Such could easily be done if an Indian could not

testify in a court of justice, much less sit as a juryman or vote for his rulers. They would feel, every day of their lives, that they were despised, hated and oppressed, and what could be the prospect of their children?

Although the Choctaw Chiefs had agreed to certain articles in a treaty, under the impression that they must leave their present country or submit to the laws of the State of Mississippi, and all the consequent evils; yet it was the prevailing opinion among the common people that the treaty would not be ratified.

In 1828, then the proposition was made by the United States Government to the Choctaws to give up their lands east of the Mississippi River for land west of the river; they sent a delegation of Choctaws and Chickasaws to inspect the country and see if it was all that it was claimed to be. Colonel David Folsom was selected as a member of that committee from his tribe. On their return a favorable report was given.

On September 27, 1828, the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed by the Chiefs and head men of the Choctaw Tribe. This was the final act that brought about the removal of the Choctaws from Mississippi.

When the news arrived that the treaty was actually ratified and that they must all find new homes within two years, gloom and despondency prevailed throughout the Nation. The Christian people, especially the members of the churches, felt the calamity most deeply. They thought of the breaking up of the meetings of the churches, the schools and Christian neighborhoods and the separation of the missionaries and teachers.

Very soon after that a communication was drawn up, by Colonel Folsom, to the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, on behalf of the members of the Church and signed by the leading members, as follows:

“Friends and Brothers—Good many years ago you came in our Nation, and said you come among them in order to teach the children of the Choctaw people. Our people rejoiced to have you teach their children and were glad to embrace the opportunity. You told us that you had a beloved book which tells about Great Jehovah. The talk

from this book we have never heard as we ought to have done. But Good Spirit, who is the maker and head of all things, has been pleased to open the ears of many of our people to hear the words of this good book you know all about—we need not make words about it. But we will appeal to what is known to yourselves of our attachment to the schools among us, and more particularly the word which this good book teaches us to walk upright before God and man. Also there has been much done for us to have books put in our hand that many of our people can learn in their own language. We are exceedingly tried. We have just heard of the ratification of the Choctaw treaty. Our doom is sealed. There is no other course for us but to turn our faces to our new homes toward the setting sun. Our rulers have assured us on many accounts it will be best to make preparation to remove next fall; and as many as can get off, it will be done.

“Friends and brothers, we can multiply words and say much on many advantages that we have received. When you came among us good many years ago, you found us, no school, no gospel, no songs of praise to Jehovah was heard. Friends and brothers, we will give glory and praise to Jehovah in sending some here to teach us the way of life. It is you our dear friends, whom the Savior of sinners has been pleased in his own goodness to make you an instrument in his hand of what has been done for us. Brothers, therefore we claim it as our privilege, as members of the church here and also we have the full assurance of approval of our head men generally that we humbly request the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to send us many of the preachers to go with us. Those who are here, we would be glad to have them go with us to our new homes. We would offer the same protection and friendship as we have done here. Do something for us more beyond the great river Mississippi, we shall be in a distressed situation.

“We humbly ask the prayers of the churches generally, and particularly the church which we stand in relation to (The Presbyterian Church). We need their prayers and help from them, as we are about to return to the wildwoods. We are your friends and brothers in Christ.”

It was not many more months until the Choctaws were making their preparations for their long journey to their new country. In this work of getting his people prepared, David Folsom had an active part. He had charge of the first party that came to the Choctaw Nation, and was appointed by the Government to take charge and care for the Indians after their arrival. It was in the fall of 1832 they arrived in what is now known as eastern Oklahoma, and settled on Little River. The history of that winter tells that many of the Choctaws would have suffered and died but for the help of Colonel Folsom.

He had a large and interesting family, who lived to exert a wide influence over the Choctaw people. His daughter Susan was the last to pass away. She died in 1920. She was the wife of William Byrd, governor of the Chickasaw Tribe 1889-91.

Col. David Folsom was the first chief of the Choctaws to be elected by ballot, was a man of generous nature, a noble patriot, a just and honest ruler, of distinguished talents, truly an illustrious Choctaw that administered the affairs of his nation during a period of the most critical and perilous times in the annals of the Choctaw Nation, conjointly with other kindred spirits. Filled with misgivings and the deepest gloom that everywhere prevailed, Col. David Folsom stood out a prominent figure. In the language of H. B. Cushman, a friend:

"He gave to his subordinate chiefs and his agitated people wise counsel upon all questions to be considered, always with a calm and noble bearing, amid prevailing confusion. Such were his characteristics that went to make him a chief of great influence for good. He had a great warmth of affection for his people and in return enjoyed the deepest affection from them. David Folsom loved nature. He was heard to say 'It rests me to look upon its varied lovely scented landscape which is in reality a means of education to the susceptible mind, and which so often has been invested with the charm of poetry and romance.' To all his friends, he seemed to have died in the midst of his great usefulness.

Few men were ever able to accomplish so much in so short a span of life for their people. He died one of the

most beloved of his tribe. The tall magnificent oak trees in the old Fort Towson cemetery cast their shadows across his tomb. Even the rains and storms of more than three-quarters of a century have not erased the inscription which reads: 'To the memory of David Folsom, the first Republican Chief of the Choctaw Nation. The promoter of industry, education, religion and morality was born January 25, 1791 and departed this life September 24, 1847. Age 56 years and eight months. "He being dead yet speaketh." ' ' "

Read by Czarina C. Conlan for the Folsom Reunion of New England, held October 23, 1926, in Boston, Mass.

The historical data for the article was found principally in The Missionary Herald, published by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, in Boston, 1820-1824-1830.

The language used in different places is incorrect, but it must be considered, he was a man who had few advantages, and it was copied exactly as he gave it.