

**MILLIE
NAHARKEY
YEATMAN
1904-1996**



**VICTIM
OF
ALLOTMENT
SCANDAL**

Millie Naharkey received part of her father's allotment lands. At age eighteen, she was kidnapped by unscrupulous oilmen trying to steal her lands. The scandal and its legal case shocked the nation.

Moses Naharkey, a Creek councilor for which Tulsa's Mooser Creek was named, and his wife Millie received 160-acre allotments. When she died in February 1901, Moses inherited half and their son Sammie the other half. When he died in December 1905, Moses' 240 acres were divided among his second wife Martha, Sammie, and little Millie, who was born in 1904.

After Moses' death, Sammie tested matrilineal inheritance, feeling he was entitled to more of his father's land than the Creek system allowed. He sued his half-sister and stepmother for 160 acres. Victorious, he transferred his 160 acres to oilman Charles Page and Alleyne Bechtel for \$2,000.

Page's hope that Sammie's land would become the next gusher were dashed but Page had other plans too. He wanted Millie's lands as well. When she returned from Chilocco Indian School near Fairfax in the early 1920s, she was known as the "rich Indian heiress". Tulsa oilman Grant Stebbins, a rival of Charles Page, wanted the lands as well.

Stebbins hired Tulsa oilman A. B. Reese and University of Oklahoma student William McNutt to promise a no-strings-attached fishing vacation to Millie and her mother Martha. While gaining the women's trust as they toured the Oklahoma countryside, the group set up in the Missouri Ozarks Roaring River resort, and Millie was given ample amounts of whisky. When McNutt promised to marry her, Martha saw a happy ending and returned to Tulsa.

Reese gave Millie a check for \$1,000 in exchange for a drilling lease. Three days after her eighteenth birthday, the men took her to a county court in Missouri, where lawyer Robert Blair had drawn up a contract that would deed Millie's lands to the Gladys Belle Oil Company, owned by Stebbins. She didn't want to sell, only to lease. Alarm bells went off in Tulsa as well. Her guardian at the powerful First National Bank was notified and soon Indian agents were searching for Millie. That's when things took an ugly turn. McNutt repeatedly forced himself on her but her nightly cries for help went unanswered. She was promised \$25,000 for a private education in Kansas City but it never arrived.

With a signed lease, the oilmen were caught by Indian agents in Kansas City. They were charged with white slavery and kidnapping but only convicted of providing liquor to an Indian. The land transfer was deemed fraudulent and reverted to Millie's guardian at First National Bank. Stebbins died in Kansas City in 1925 with his reputation intact. His Maple Ridge mansion remains in the affluent neighborhood he helped develop. Unable to attend the Kansas City finishing school, Millie returned to Tulsa, married Arthur Yeatman, a German-Creek farmer, and raised two children. She fought constantly with her guardian at First National Bank, who insisted she was "an incompetent Indian".

Millie won a resounding victory in the Oklahoma Supreme Court in 1936. They ruled that Page's partition of the Naharkey lands was in violation of the restrictions on full-blood Indians. Millie recovered 80 acres of land near Keystone Lake but her guardian still controlled her assets. Millie sold her part of Moses' land for \$50,000, but any purchase had to be approved by her guardian, who was paid generously for his "services". Her angry letters to U.S. Secretary of the Interior are preserved at the National Archives. Millie died in 1996, nearly penniless.