

**MUSKOGEE  
YARGEE  
ROSS**  
c.1844-1913



**UNITED  
CREEK AND  
CHEROKEE  
NATIONS**

Muskogee Yargee was a descendant of three of the most prominent families of the Muskogee Tribe in Alabama – the McGillivray, Yargee and McQueen families. Her marriage also linked her to the prominent Ross family in Cherokee Nation.

Muskogee Yargee was born about 1844 in Indian Territory. Her father Captain Checotarh Yargee was married to Milly McQueen, and her sisters Nancy and Tallassee, at the same time! His father George Washington Cornellls was known as “Big Warrior”. Milly’s great uncle was “Great Alexander” McGillivray of the Muskogees, Creeks, Seminoles and Chicamauga-Cherokees, considered the most brilliant man ever born on Alabama soil. Her great-grandfather Scotsman Lachlan McGillivray moved to the Muskogee Nation about 1736, opened a trading business and became quite wealthy. He stayed with them for ninety years until his death in 1811 at age 128 (really!).

Yargee and Milly lived in Alabama until the Creeks were forcibly removed in 1838. Being one of the largest slave owners and very wealthy, he brought a large number of livestock, horses, and slaves westward to settle on the Canadian River near North Fork Town, three miles east of Eufaula.

One son died on the route west and was buried near the Mississippi River, even though they didn’t know the river’s name at the time. Muskogee was born in the Creek Nation near North Fork Town. Although no English was spoken in the home, the children learned it in school. Each girl was given a personal maid after passing young childhood after no longer needing the service of a nurse. During the Civil War, many Muskogees or Creeks, as the tribe became known in their western home. moved to Fort Gibson, in the Cherokee Nation, for protection.

Here Muskogee met Joshua Ross, a member of the prominent Cherokee Nation Ross family, whose uncle was John Ross, Chief of the Cherokee Nation for forty years. Born in Alabama in 1833, Joshua settled in Sallisaw in 1836 and was raised by George Murrell, after losing his parents. Joshua graduated from the Male Academy in 1855 and Emory and Henry College in Virginia in 1860 before becoming a Female Seminary teacher in 1861. He moved to Fort Gibson during the Civil War to work as a clerk in the sutler’s store. After her parents selected Joshua as a suitable husband, they were married on May 7, 1864 in Fort Gibson. The marriage united two of the most notable families of the early days in Indian Territory.

In 1871, after the Katy railroad was built and Muskogee was established as a railroad town, the couple moved there and Joshua opened a general store named Red Front at Cherokee Street and West Broadway, with the store sign in both English and Cherokee. As a member of the Creek Nation, Muskogee claimed land near the railroad from Callahan Street to Okmulgee Street. They would build a home at 617 East Broadway.

Joshua recognized the potential of Muskogee and quietly purchased land until he owned every parcel east of the Katy tracks. For the next twenty years, he sold piece after piece, receiving a constantly increasing revenue from each sale. After Joshua opened a law office with W. F. Seaver in 1891, the couple often entertained prominent Creeks and Cherokees in their home. Guests were always welcome, no matter how numerous – or how hungry. Muskogee prepared authentic Indian dishes that she learned from her mother.

Muskogee knew all the Indian remedies used in sickness so she was constantly called upon because trained nurses and hospitals didn’t exist at the time. She had cures for pneumonia or winter fever as it was called, colds, inflammation, fevers, and how to stop the flow of blood in case of accidents. Muskogee died in 1914 at age 70 in Muskogee. Joshua died in 1922.