

Iti Fabussa



Question from a Claremore, Oklahoma reader:

In reviewing the November 18, 1903, Choctaw Rolls for Red River County, Cerrogorda, Indian Territory, I see my great-grandfather's name entered as A-tok-lan-tubbee. While James Milligan's book "The Choctaw of Oklahoma" identifies this as a war name ("tubbe" as "killer", my Choctaw Language Dictionary is unable to accurately define the "A-tok-lan" portion of his name. Understanding the volume of requests, could you direct me to someone who could provide an accurate translation of his name as related to Choctaw culture during Post Removal 1834-1907.

Answer: The Choctaw Language Dictionary is an edited work by John R. Swanton from Cyrus Byington's manuscripts. Swanton revised Byington's spellings of the Choctaw Language. Swanton substituted a for v. The Choctaw word for "kill" appears as "Abi" in the Choctaw Language Dictionary. This same work in the form of a noun means a "killer". It may also mean "to win at a game of chance." The "Atok-lan" is a misspelled word meaning "second time; again." It is spelled "atuklant" in the Choctaw Language Dictionary. The compound word name means, "kills the second time", or it may

mean, "wins the second time."

Names were given mostly based on acts of heroism or athleticism, which brought good to a particular group. However it may be based on hunting skills or on personality traits. Your great-grandfather's name implies he earned his name by doing something twice in a fashion, which earned respect from his peers. Even an oratory skill in a debate can earn a title. Your great-grandfather may have been a great warrior in battle, a great hunter, a great ballplayer or a great orator.

Please mail your questions to Iti Fabussa c/o BISHINIK, P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702, or e-mail to bishinik@choctawnation.com with "Iti Fabussa" in the subject line.

Editor's Note: Due to the volume of the response to this column our writers will prioritize the questions according to topics and space availability. We will publish as many as possible in future issues of the newspaper.

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