

The Cherokee Rogers County association met on Thursday June 8th 2006 at approximately 7pm. Former Deputy Chief Ketcher (who had served under Mankiller – who in an effort to prejudice the Cherokee people against the Freedmen told the Baltimore Sun newspaper in July 1984 that the freedmen did not have Cherokee blood) was the special guest speaker and was so listed on the meeting agenda. He first introduced himself by talking about having served the American people in the military during wartime. He then talked about his petition which if approved will take away the citizenship rights of the Cherokee freedmen people. He made statements that the “freedmen citizenship had been forced on the Cherokee people”. Mrs Vann pointed out the inaccuracy of this inflammatory statement, and cited the rulings of Federal Court cases Cherokee Nation Vs US 12 Indian Claims Commission 570, and the court of Claims case Cherokee nation et al Vs. United States 180 Claims Court 181, and the tribal court case Lucy Allen Vs Cherokee tribal council JAT 04-09 as proof. She offered to mail or email these cases to any or all people present. Ketcher stated he was not familiar with these 3 cases and Vann said that she would email or mail them to him. (One case was presented to Ketcher on June 12 in person; the others were mailed later that week. All of these 3 cases are listed on the Cherokee link of the descendants of freedmen website).

At another place on the program, Councilwoman Cowan-Watts of District 7 told the Cherokee voters that if they are able to get the proposed constitutional amendment on the ballot regarding the citizenship rights of the Cherokee freedmen, this would be the first time that Cherokee citizens would ever have voted on who would be their citizens. She said that the tribal citizens did not have to grant citizenship based on treaties and only needed to grant citizenship based on the constitution. Vann, objected to this statement, asking Cowan-Watts, did not the all classes of Cherokee people vote on who would be their citizens in 1975 – including freedmen, Delaware, full bloods, etc.?

Current Deputy Chief Grayson stated that the people did not have to do as before ; and if the proposed constitutional amendment was passed, the Cherokee people would be able to have an “all Indian tribe”.

An individual present in the audience wanted to know about whether or not the freedmen were on the Dawes rolls; Vann answered that there were several lists of Cherokee citizens on the Dawes rolls and all of the people on the lists had equal rights as tribal members and in receiving allotments and were long standing tribal members. The question was also raised from the audience regarding the freedmen having Cherokee blood, Vann stated that the freedmen can establish Cherokee blood ancestry from a variety of sources, Cowan stated that the Anglen case proves that the freedmen are not “Cherokees by blood” – (a confusing statement because invariably the “citizen by blood” person asking the question is asking if the people listed as freedmen had Indian blood / Indian ancestors or whether or not all the freedmen persons ancestors were Africans; not whether or not the election board will accept the freedmen peoples proofs of Cherokee blood to run for office or whether someone listed as a freedmen was also separately listed on the Cherokee by blood list of tribal members).

Councilwoman Cowan said that it bothered her that the freedmen had never before attended meetings of the Rogers county association before that night and had not been attending the tribal council meetings before their own issues came into the forefront Vann stated that many freedmen people, after having their blue tribal membership cards snatched from them in 1983 under the direction of chief Swimmer (a practice which the Lucy Allen tribal court ruling shows to have been illegal) became afraid to come to the council meetings because they thought they would be turned away at the door without a blue tribal membership card. Vann also told her that it had been very difficult to find any information on exactly when the Rogers county Cherokee group had their meetings (note to the reader – the June 15 meeting date listed on the tribal website was the incorrect date)

Complaints regarding misleading statements made by Ketcher and Cowan Watts were made to the tribal council by Mrs Vann in a June 2006 letter which is now posted on the Descendants of Freedmen Associations Cherokee link at www.freedmen5tribes.com

Attendants of the Rogers County Cherokee Association June 2006 meeting included Descendants of freedmen president Mrs Vann and Mrs Parks, daughter in law of citizen by blood Mrs Rattlinggourd; and South Coffeyville based Native American Fellowship Corporation Board members Mr Jones and Mr Davis. Also Present were media correspondents Tulsa World Reporter Mrs Ruckman and Mrs Monet of National Native news, and Mrs Doyle of the Claremore newspaper.

Marilyn Vann – president – Descendants of freedmen Association
www.freedmen5tribes.com