

# The Unknown Claim

## Introduction

The Guion Miller Rolls, compiled between 1906 and 1910, stand as a testament to the resilience and determination of the Cherokee people in their pursuit of justice and recognition. These rolls, named after the Commissioner tasked with overseeing the process, Guion Miller, meticulously document the applications of over 45,000 individuals claiming Cherokee ancestry, seeking compensation for lands ceded to the United States government.

The journey to create the Guion Miller Rolls was arduous and fraught with challenges. The Cherokee people had long endured forced removal from their ancestral lands, broken treaties, and relentless discrimination. Despite these hardships, they remained steadfast in their quest for recognition and restitution.

The rolls, therefore, serve not only as a genealogical record but also as a poignant reminder of a people's struggle for survival and sovereignty.

The process of compiling the Guion Miller Rolls was no easy feat. It required meticulous research, extensive interviews, and careful examination of historical documents. Commissioner Miller and his team traveled across the country, gathering testimonies and evidence from Cherokee descendants scattered across various states. The resulting rolls provide a comprehensive account of the Cherokee people's lineage, their familial ties, and their connection to their ancestral lands.

The Guion Miller Rolls hold immense significance for the Cherokee Nation. They have become an invaluable resource for genealogists, historians, and researchers seeking to trace their Cherokee ancestry. Moreover, the rolls serve as a powerful symbol of Cherokee identity and cultural heritage. They represent the resilience of a people who, despite facing adversity, have preserved

their traditions, language, and connection to their homeland.

The Guion Miller Rolls have also played a crucial role in shaping legal precedents and influencing the development of Indian law. The Cherokee claims, adjudicated through the U.S. Supreme Court, established important legal principles related to tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples. The rolls have served as a reference point in numerous legal cases involving Native American tribes and their claims to land, resources, and cultural rights.

The Guion Miller Rolls stand as a testament to the enduring legacy of the Cherokee people. They represent a chapter in American history marked by both struggle and resilience. The rolls serve as a reminder of the importance of recognizing and upholding the rights of indigenous peoples, and they continue to inspire generations in their pursuit of justice, equality, and self-determination.

## Book Description

Embark on a journey through history as we delve into the world of the Guion Miller Rolls, a remarkable collection of documents that shed light on the enduring legacy of the Cherokee people. These rolls, compiled between 1906 and 1910, provide an invaluable glimpse into the lives and struggles of over 45,000 individuals seeking recognition and compensation for lands ceded to the United States government.

Within the pages of this book, you will discover the intricate process of compiling the Guion Miller Rolls, a testament to the resilience and determination of the Cherokee people. Witness the tireless efforts of Commissioner Guion Miller and his team as they meticulously gather testimonies, examine historical records, and piece together the fragmented threads of Cherokee ancestry. The resulting rolls offer a comprehensive account of the Cherokee people's

lineage, their familial ties, and their connection to their ancestral lands.

Explore the profound significance of the Guion Miller Rolls for the Cherokee Nation. Delve into their role as a genealogical resource, enabling countless individuals to trace their Cherokee roots and reclaim their cultural heritage. Understand the rolls' importance as a symbol of Cherokee identity and sovereignty, representing a people's unwavering spirit in the face of adversity.

Uncover the legal implications of the Guion Miller Rolls, their influence on the development of Indian law, and their role in shaping legal precedents related to tribal sovereignty, treaty rights, and the rights of indigenous peoples. Witness how the rolls have served as a reference point in numerous legal cases, shaping the legal landscape for Native American tribes and their pursuit of justice.

The Guion Miller Rolls stand as a poignant reminder of the Cherokee people's struggle for recognition, justice,

and self-determination. They embody a chapter in American history marked by both conflict and resilience, highlighting the importance of upholding the rights of indigenous peoples and fostering reconciliation. Through these rolls, we gain a deeper understanding of the complexities of Cherokee history and the enduring legacy of a people who have persevered against countless obstacles.

# Chapter 1: The Forgotten Quest

## The History of the Cherokee Claims

The Cherokee people have a long and complex history with the United States government, marked by both cooperation and conflict. In the early 19th century, the Cherokee Nation occupied a vast territory in the southeastern United States, encompassing parts of what are now the states of Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Alabama. However, the discovery of gold on Cherokee lands in the 1820s led to increased pressure from white settlers and the U.S. government for the Cherokee to cede their lands.

In 1835, the U.S. government forced the Cherokee to sign the Treaty of New Echota, which required them to give up their lands east of the Mississippi River and relocate to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma). Many Cherokee opposed the treaty, arguing that it had been signed by a small faction of leaders who did not

represent the majority of the tribe. The Cherokee who refused to leave their ancestral lands were forcibly removed by the U.S. military in a brutal campaign known as the Trail of Tears.

In the aftermath of the Trail of Tears, the Cherokee Nation struggled to rebuild their lives in Indian Territory. They faced poverty, disease, and discrimination. In addition, the U.S. government continued to pressure the Cherokee to sell their remaining lands. In 1893, the U.S. government allotted the Cherokee lands in Indian Territory to individual households. This allotment process led to the further fragmentation of Cherokee lands and the loss of their traditional communal landownership system.

Despite the challenges they faced, the Cherokee people persevered. They maintained their cultural traditions, language, and political institutions. In the early 20th century, the Cherokee began to file claims with the U.S. government seeking compensation for the lands that

had been taken from them. These claims were based on the treaties that the U.S. government had signed with the Cherokee Nation.

The Cherokee claims were initially rejected by the U.S. government. However, in 1906, Congress authorized the U.S. Court of Claims to hear the claims. The court appointed Guion Miller as a special commissioner to investigate the claims. Miller spent the next four years gathering evidence and interviewing Cherokee claimants. In 1910, he submitted his report to the court, which found that the Cherokee were entitled to compensation for the lands that had been taken from them.

The U.S. government eventually paid the Cherokee \$5 million in compensation for their lost lands. This money was distributed to Cherokee households, and it helped to improve their economic conditions. However, the Cherokee claims remain a controversial issue. Some Cherokee people argue that the U.S. government has

never fully compensated them for the lands that were taken from them.

# Chapter 1: The Forgotten Quest

## The Discovery of the Guion Miller Rolls

In the annals of American history, the Guion Miller Rolls stand as a testament to the resilience and determination of the Cherokee people. These rolls, compiled between 1906 and 1910, meticulously document the applications of over 45,000 individuals seeking compensation for lands ceded to the United States government.

For decades, the Guion Miller Rolls lay forgotten, gathering dust in the archives of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They were rediscovered in the 1970s by a team of genealogists and historians who recognized their immense significance. The rolls provided a wealth of information about the Cherokee people, their lineage, and their connection to their ancestral lands.

The discovery of the Guion Miller Rolls was a pivotal moment in Cherokee history. It marked the beginning

of a new era of research and understanding of the Cherokee people's past. The rolls have since become an invaluable resource for genealogists, historians, and researchers seeking to trace their Cherokee ancestry. They have also played a crucial role in shaping legal precedents and influencing the development of Indian law.

The Guion Miller Rolls offer a glimpse into the lives of the Cherokee people during a tumultuous period in American history. The rolls provide detailed information about their names, ages, occupations, and places of residence. They also reveal the challenges they faced, including forced removal from their ancestral lands, discrimination, and poverty.

The discovery of the Guion Miller Rolls was a major breakthrough in the study of Cherokee history. It has enabled researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the Cherokee people's culture, traditions, and way of life. The rolls have also helped to raise awareness of

the injustices that the Cherokee people have endured throughout history.

The Guion Miller Rolls are a powerful reminder of the resilience and determination of the Cherokee people. They stand as a testament to their unwavering commitment to preserving their culture, their identity, and their connection to their ancestral lands.

# Chapter 1: The Forgotten Quest

## The Significance of the Rolls

The Guion Miller Rolls, meticulously compiled between 1906 and 1910, hold immense significance for the Cherokee people, the United States government, and historians alike. These rolls serve as more than just a genealogical record; they embody a complex tapestry of historical, legal, and cultural importance.

For the Cherokee Nation, the Guion Miller Rolls stand as a testament to their resilience and unwavering pursuit of justice. They provide tangible evidence of the Cherokee people's ancestral lands and their rightful claims to compensation for lands ceded to the U.S. government. The rolls have been instrumental in preserving the Cherokee Nation's identity and cultural heritage, serving as a vital resource for genealogists, historians, and researchers seeking to trace their Cherokee ancestry.

The Guion Miller Rolls also hold legal significance. They have been extensively referenced in legal cases involving Native American tribes and their claims to land, resources, and cultural rights. The rolls have played a pivotal role in shaping legal precedents and influencing the development of Indian law. Their meticulous documentation of Cherokee lineage and ancestral ties has served as a valuable source of evidence in determining tribal membership and eligibility for various benefits and entitlements.

Moreover, the Guion Miller Rolls offer a unique glimpse into the history of the Cherokee people. They provide a detailed account of the Cherokee people's lives, their migrations, and their interactions with the U.S. government. The rolls capture the names, ages, and relationships of Cherokee individuals, offering insights into their family structures, communities, and cultural practices. Researchers have utilized the rolls to study Cherokee social organization, kinship patterns, and demographic trends.

The significance of the Guion Miller Rolls extends beyond their genealogical, legal, and historical value. They represent a symbolic triumph for the Cherokee people, a testament to their endurance and determination in the face of adversity. The rolls serve as a reminder of the Cherokee people's struggle for recognition, sovereignty, and justice, and they continue to inspire generations in their pursuit of equality and self-determination.

**This extract presents the opening three sections of the first chapter.**

**Discover the complete 10 chapters and 50 sections by purchasing the book, now available in various formats.**

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