

The Trial of Ned Christie

**Cherokee National Capitol Building
100 South Muskogee Avenue
Tahlequah, OK 74464**

Friday, June 10 and Saturday, 11, 2011

When acknowledging some of Indian Territory's most dangerous outlaws, one name never fails to surface: Ned Christie. Accused of killing a U.S. deputy marshal, Christie's five-year standoff with the federal government and refusal to submit to a "white man's court" under Judge Isaac C. Parker in Fort Smith, Arkansas, made him one of the most hunted men in United States history. Over a century has passed and controversy surrounding the events leading up to and the assassination of Christie continue to exist. Despite the fact that Ned Christie was a well respected Cherokee Senator and was never convicted in U.S. or Indian courts for any crime, many historians portray him as an outlaw and murderer of a deputy marshal.

What is "The Trial of Ned Christie"? An interpretive and educational living history program that allows area citizens to learn local history in an interesting and unconventional manner. Although Ned Christie was never allowed to stand trial in his own nation, this program can possibly answer the question of "what might have happened" if the Cherokees were allowed to have complete legal jurisdiction.

Goal/Purpose: The goal of the trial is to educate area citizens on the jurisdictional conflicts the Cherokee Nation faced during the 19th century with the U.S. federal government, primarily focusing on the Fort Smith Court under the "Hangin' Judge" Isaac C. Parker. Although the Cherokee government had the right to hold judicial proceedings, problems arose when non-Indians were involved. Who had jurisdiction to try and sentence individuals when crimes were committed by or against them on Cherokee land? These jurisdictional issues created a complex situation that was often resisted by traditional Cherokees, particularly members of the Keetoowah Society, who felt they affected tribal sovereignty.

Procedure:

5:30 p.m. – Doors open for Exhibit

6:30 p.m. – Welcome and Introduction into the case of Ned Christie

6:35 p.m. – Murder of Dan Maples (Capitol Square lawn)

6:50 p.m. – Opening dialogue

7:00 p.m. – Trial begins

Seating:

There are 60 seats that are saleable in the courtroom and 20 seats in the AV room downstairs. 12 people each night will be pulled to act as jurors.

Characters to be portrayed:

Prosecutor

Defense Attorney

Judge

Ned Christie (Cherokee)

Sam Maples (non-Cherokee)

George Jefferson (non-Cherokee)

Mack Peel (non-Cherokee)

Nancy Shell (Cherokee)

Charley Bobtail (Cherokee)

John Parris (Cherokee)

Bud Trainor (Cherokee)

George Parris (Cherokee)

Robin Vann