

Charles Marion Phelps Sr.'s 1907 Cherokee Application

Winston-Salem Joseph

No. 2024.15

3P Pointexter

EASTERN CHEROKEES

APPLICATION

OF

Chas. M. Phelps

For share of money appropriated for the Eastern Cherokee Indians by the Act of Congress approved June 30, 1906, in accordance with the decrees of the Court of Claims of May 12, 1905, and May 28, 1906.

9-724

INDIAN OFFICE-
EASTERN CHEROKEES
MAR 30 1907

April, 2001

Douglas Kemper Phelps
New Bern, N.C.

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The Cherokee Indian Application of Charles Marion Phelps Sr., First Son of Jacob Phelps

April 2001

(Author's comment: Charles Sr. (1877-1939) of Forsyth County, N.C. was my great grandfather and the son of Jacob Amby Ibzan Phelps and Nancy "Nannie/Thanie" Bethania Marion.)

In 1905 the Eastern Cherokees sued the United States concerning grievances arising from past treaties. The court decided in favor of the Cherokees and instructed the Secretary of the interior to identify the persons entitled to participate in the distribution of more than \$1 million (at least one applicant thought it was \$6 million). Obviously, an applicant did not know how much would be received, but the amount probably was thought to be large. The fund was to be distributed to all Cherokee Indians who were alive on May 28, 1906 and who were members at the time of the 1835 and 1845 treaties *or who were descendants of such persons*. About 90,000 individuals applied; 30,820 were accepted. It has been reported that the eventual settlement was a whopping \$133.13 each. Final approval was made in 1910. All such applications are on file in the National Archives and with the Cherokees. (*Guion Miller Roll "Plus" of Eastern Cherokee 1909*) The names may be viewed on the internet at <http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/guionmiller/index.htm>

Charles applied in 1907. His file number was 20203 and is listed on the Guion-Miller Roll (named for those who supervised the projects) as "not accepted". On his application the reason given for his rejection was simply "Poindexter" referring to a common ancestor used by many claimants who were rejected. His claim traced his genealogy back to a Chief Donahoo through his mother, Nancy "Nannie" Marion of Surry County. The Marion family and one Scott (named by Charles in his application) are listed in the internet LDS Church records (familysearch.com) as being Cherokee although from all known facts, they clearly were not Indian. About 30 Marions from NC applied including at least one brother of Nancy, mother to Charles. The applications of Samuel Marion (brother) and a Leonard S. Scott gave the same genealogy back to Dohanoo as Charles. Perhaps they collaborated on their story since they both expressed uncertainties on one point.

Keep in mind that Charles would have been Chief Donahoo's 6th great grandson - a long way back.

March, 1907 The application was a lengthy form, which required a detailed bloodline listing. He carefully described his family ancestry starting with his mother. It began with the following unedited paragraphs:

"I claim through my mother Nancy B. Phelps (Maiden Name) "Marion". My grand-Mother, Sallie Marion. (Maiden-name Houser) My Great-grandmother "Nancy Houser" (Maiden name "Scott") My Great-Great-Grand-Father "Leonard Scott Sr. My Great-Great-Great-Grand-Mother "Annie Scott" (Maiden-name Poindexter) My Great-Geat-Great-Great-Grand-Mother "Bettie Poindexter" (Maiden-name Pledge) "Miss Pledge" was the daughter of "Francis Pledge" "Francis Pledge married the daughter of a Cherokee Indian Chief, named "Donaha". Some spells it "Donahoo".

[Charles then listed his and Nancy's families. *A curious statement by Charles was that his father's parents "died before my time, have no record of my Father's side." Yet, his father was alive and in Winston-Salem at the time of that statement.*]

"I can trace the record of my family on my mothers side back to an old Cherokee Indian chief who was named "Donaha" or "Donahoo". Our record shows that this chief's daughter married a White man by the name of "Pledge". Mr. Pledge had a daughter named "Bettie Pledge" she married a Thomas Poindexter, their daughter Annie Poindexter married a Daniel Scott. They had a son named "Leonard Scott Sr." who married a Martin. then Mr. & Mrs. Leonard Scott Sr. had a daughter named "Nancy" who married a Apperson, they had one child, and then Mr. Apperson died. His widow (who was a Scott) married (second time) a Samuel Houser, they had a daughter, named Sallie Houser, this daughter, "Sallie

Houser" married a Frank J. Marion. they had a daughter named Nancy B. Marion. this Miss Marion (Nancy B.) (My mother) married a J.A.I. Phelps. Mr. and Mrs. J.A.I. Phelps had two children, Charles Marion Phelps. Miss Georgia Green Phelps."

"This Cherokee Indian chief lived on the waters of the Yadkin river, near the Pilot Mountain. He was the Chief of the last tribe of Cherokees living this part of the country. In honor of whom this station "Donaha" on the Southern R.R. was named. (See map of Southern Rwy.) Chief Donahoo's daughter married a "Francis Pledge" (Sometimes spelled "Pledger" or Plauche)." [Charles repeats most of the ancestry.]

Later Charles wrote several more letters, using his newly-form company letterheads. Several times he asked what the settlement might be and offered to go to Washington or to hire a lawyer there if needed. He quickly replied to any questions he received by mail. One of his unedited letters, which follows, clearly shows his bent toward detail and completeness:

A Letter by Charles in Late 1907 "The following is a part of the information you ask for in your letter of Nov.12, 1907. The records have been poorly kept, and too, I have not had the time yet to make the investigation as complete as I would like to. I will appreciate an immediate reply to this, if you think this is sufficient, I will of course cease my search. If not, I will not let a stone be unturned till I have what is absolutely necessary"

[Charles comments on Thomas Poindexter's first wife] "The second [wife], the *daughter* of an Indian Chief. "Bettie Pledge" . Thomas and Bettie Pledge Poindexter lived in Surry Co., N.C. immediately with the Cherokee Indians, only from our records, they did not live as the Indians. At one time they ran a Hotel at a place called "Old Richmond" and at that time the county seat of Surry Co., but now this place is a Township in Forsyth Co. [Note: some say the town of Donnaha existed near Bailey Bottoms before it burned.] Among her guest at one time, was "Andrew Jackson" and as per the letters of information I have, he left and failed to pay his bill. It stood against him until after the battle of New Orleans, and when they heard of his gallant work there, Thomas and Betty canceled the debt."

"It is supposed that Betty Pledge Poindexter was born in Louise Co VA. and I think the date of her birth is unknown. She died Feb.29th, 1816. She was buried on a hill beside the Yadin River in plain view of the RY Station called Dannaha. Her grave is there not undisturbed only by time. Her children and their names as follows. Boys: Francis, Arch, Pledge, Wm. P. born 12/7/1767, Jno.G. 8/8/1773-10/4/1863, Robt. A. born 7/4/1783 Daughters and their married names as follows: Betsy McCamers, Polly Riddings, Patsy Petit, Ann Radford Scott, Sally Lovell, Dolly Randal."

"The applications of the Phelps's Marion's Martins's Scott's Davis's Cox's Lovell's and a few others, come in through and by "ANN RADFORD POINDEXTER SCOTT". My claim goes in as follows, which please attach this sheet to my application. My Grand-Mother "Sally Houser Marion", the daughter of "Nancy Scott Houser". a daughter of "Leonard Scott. which was the son of Daniel Scott. who married "ANN RADFORD POINDEXTER" the daughter of Betty Pledge Poindexter, which was the *daughter* of an Indian Chief."

December, 1907 A letter from the Commissioner quizzed him as to his naming Betty Pledge Poindexter in his application as the grand-daughter of Chief Donahoo, yet later is named as his daughter. It seems Charles was becoming as confused as we are.

March 18, 1908 Charles gave a *sworn deposition* in Winston-Salem. The following is the exact wording of the deposition. This deposition is on microfilm in the NC Archives and in the National Archives.

Poindexter App. #20203

Chas. M. Phelps being first duly sworn deposes and says:

I am 30 years of age and reside at Winston-Salem, N.C. I was born in Forsythe County. My mother was born in Surry County. I claim through my mother, and through her through my grandmother, Sallie Marion who married a Hooser. She was born in Surry County. She was 70 odd years of age at the time of her death, which occurred about 2 years ago. **I do not claim Cherokee blood through any other source than my mother and grandmother, back to Bettie Pledge Poindexter. I cannot say when I first heard of my Indian blood, but, as a boy I heard it spoken of in a general way.** I did not hear of Donahoo at that time. I first heard of him about 2 years ago. I learned that I was a descendant of Bettie Pledge Poindexter through the older members of my family. I cannot say where Donahoo lived. As the information came to me, he lived in N.C. His people were in North Carolina, but I do not know where came from. I learned that Bettie Pledge Poindexter was born in Louisa County, VA. from Mr. Pleasant Poindexter. I learned that Thomas Poindexter was an Englishman who settled from Dr. Sullivan indirectly. It would appear that Thomas and Bettie Pledge Poindexter were originally from Virginia. I first learned that Donahoo was considered a Cherokee Indian within the last two years. None of my people, so far as I know ever lived with the Indians as Indians. I have no family tradition which enables me to state when Donahoo died. It was said by the older people that he was a Cherokee Indian, but I do not know enough about Indians to know. Rev. Heltzerbeck who lives in Stokes County ?, near Pinnacle, probably knows more about this matter than anyone else. His post office is possibly Rural Hall. As I understand it Donahoo was an Indian Chief who had a daughter who married a white man by the name of Pledge, and they had a daughter named Elizabeth or Bettie, Pledge, who married Thomas Poindexter, and through that source my Indian rights come. William Poindexter, the son of Thomas and Bettie Pledge was born December 7, 1767. I learned this from Pleasant Poindexter [son of Bettie Pledge Poindexter]. I think William P. Poindexter [brother to Pleasant] was born and lived in Surry County, N.C. **I was never enrolled as an Indian and never applied for enrollment before. I know of no reason why my people were not enrolled as Indians in 1851.¹ I do not know why my ancestors were not enrolled in 1835.² I do not think my people claimed to be Indians, but simply claimed to be related to Bettie Pledge Poindexter. None of my people that are living have ever claimed to be Indians as I know.** They have always been admitted to the White schools without question.

[Charles' signature]

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18th day of March, 1908, at Winston-Salem, N.C.

Special Commissioner

Court of Claims [no signature]

¹ To be eligible for payment persons had to show they were descended from a person who was an Eastern Cherokee in 1835, usually proving descent from a person on the Drennen or Chapman Rolls and also who was NOT on the Old Settler roll of 1851. The Drennen Roll (1851) was the first census of the Cherokee who arrived in Oklahoma in 1839 - who were forced moved to the west (the "Trail of Tears"). The Old Settler Roll (1851) was a list of those living Cherokee in 1851 who were already in Oklahoma when others arrived in 1839. The Chapman Roll (1852) was a list of Cherokee still living in the east.

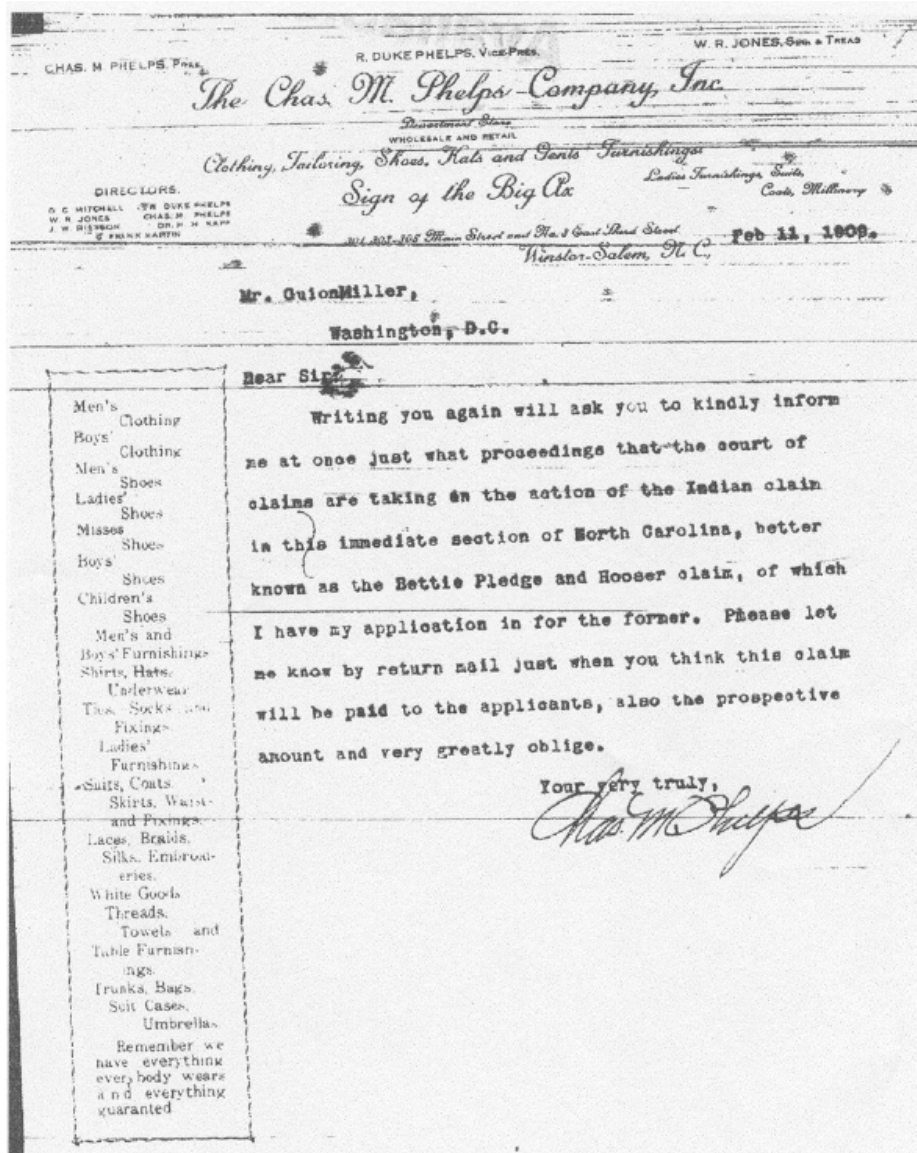
² The 1835 Henderson Roll was a census of over 16,000 Cherokees residing in NC, Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama that were to be removed to Oklahoma. Those on that list were considered to be Cherokee. Additionally, remaining back east were some mixed-blood families, most 1/4 blood or less, who assimilated to the white families. Some later moved back into the Indian

February 11, 1909 The last paper in Charles' application was this letter to Mr. Guion Miller: "Writing you again will ask you to kindly inform me at once just what proceedings that the court of claims are taking on the action of the Indian claim in this immediate section of North Carolina, better known as the Bettie Pledge and Hooser claim, of which I have my application in for the former. Please let me know by return mail just when you think this claim will be paid to the applicants, also the prospective amount and very greatly oblige."

Documents Submitted by Charles and Others

If you are interested in getting a copy of the documents submitted by Charles Phelps and others, please contact me at 252-637-6068.

Below is just one of the letters written by Charles Phelps. It is interesting that Charles typed all his material. Please note the very interesting logo he used: "Sign of the Big Ax". Was this related to his Cherokee thoughts?



Why was Charles' Application Rejected?

April, 2001

Whatever the facts are it is very clear that *Charles believed* he had Cherokee blood since he stated that belief twice in his sworn testimony. There is no mistaking his words, **'I do not claim Cherokee blood through any other source** than my mother and grandmother, back to Bettie Pledge Poindexter. I cannot say when I first heard of *my Indian blood*, but, as a boy I heard it spoken of in a general way.

Charles' claim to Indian heritage was to Chief Donahoo through his mother, Nancy Marion, daughter of Frank Marion of Stokes County. His ancestors linked back to a Poindexter who was named by many others claiming a Donahoo ancestry. A sizeable number of Marions also applied using Poindexter as the common ancestor. Those claims were known as the "Poindexter case". The claim that Donahoo and a white woman had a child has never been proven - or disproved - largely because the lack of records for many people in those early days - especially Indians.³ Charles' application was officially rejected because of the "Poindexter case" which was a catch-all for those who used a Betty Pledge Poindexter as a key person in the lineage back to Donahoo. The government concluded that while it was very possible that an Indian was an ancestor of the claimants, it was highly unlikely that he was a Cherokee. Therefore, the government rejected all such cases. Interestingly some researchers now are claiming that the denial was later overcome in court by one claimant (see *Donahoo: Myth Or Factual*). As of 2/2001 no one had uncovered the exact nature of that settlement.

Beyond the rejection, Charles was not entirely consistent as to whether he felt his mother or her parents were Indian. On the one hand he said, "I do not claim Cherokee blood through any other source than *my mother and grandmother*, back to Bettie Pledge Poindexter" which implies that he felt they were Indian also. Yet he also said, "I do not think my people claimed to be Indians, but simply claimed to be related to Bettie Pledge Poindexter. None of my people *that are living* have ever claimed to be Indians as I know." That statement clearly says they were not Indian.

Charles appears to be claiming blood lines yet does not claim to be Indian, which was a tricky position to take in order to be eligible for the money.

Another possible weakness in his claim was that Leonard Scott Sr. was the son of Daniel Scott. Most researchers say that Leonard was born in 1768 and Daniel in 1757 which does not allow time for a father and son. Most researchers say that Leonard was a brother to Daniel Scott. If true, there is no blood line back through Daniel's wife, Ann Radford Poindexter, and thus to the Indian. Yet at least two of those who applied, a Marion and a Scott, confirmed Charles' claim. However, another currently accepted genealogy trail says that Leonard Scott, Sr. is not in the necessary lineage because his apparent daughter, Nancy Scott, as reported by Charles and others, was actually the daughter of Daniel Scott. This genealogy would clearly make the lineage back to the Indian complete. In either case, Charles' ancestry to Donahoo would be valid.

Intriguing, But Confusing LDS Church Information

The Marion family, a Hauser family (incorrectly named as Hansen by the LDS records), and a Scott - all named by Charles in his application - are listed in the internet LDS Church records (familysearch.com) as being Cherokee from Indian territory although from available facts, they clearly were not Indian. No source documents were named although the person who recorded the information

³ Colonial marriages were always recorded by the Anglican Church, state church of England. After the Revolutionary War, all such NC records were lost and most in Va disappeared. Generally speaking, only personal Bibles, wills, property records and scattered Quaker records remain.

was able to tell me that the Cherokee applications of 1907 were used. There is no record indicating which application was used even though there are 25 Marion applications alone. The three I have seen do not imply that these named families were Indian or were from Indian Territory. Surry County has never been "Indian territory". Unfortunately, this undocumented information is still to be found in the LDS records

Some of the brothers of Charles' mother, Nancy, also applied. Samuel Marion and Leonard S. Scott, the only others I have researched, gave the same genealogy back to Dohanoo as Charles gave. Perhaps they collaborated on their story since they both expressed uncertainty on the same point.

Charles' Ancestry Back to Donahoo

The following is a summary of Charles' ancestry claim. Donahoo would have been Charles' 6th great grandfather (Douglas Phelps' 8th great grandfather). Names in italics have been added by later work. Bold names are the direct links.

Charles' mother was **Nancy Bethania Marion**.

Nancy Bethania Marion's parents were Franklin J. Marion and **Sally Houser/Hauser**.

Sallie Houser's parents Samuel Houser/Hauser and **Nancy Scott**.

Nancy Scott's parents were **Leonard Scott, Sr.** and *Nancy Butts* Martin.

Leonard Scott, Sr.'s parents were Daniel Scott and **Ann Radford Poindexter**.

Ann Radford Poindexter's parents were Thomas Poindexter and **Elizabeth Bettie Pledge**.

(The next generation was omitted in one letter)

Elizabeth Bettie Pledge's parents were "a daughter of an Indian Chief, Donahoo" (**Elizabeth Bettie Donahoo**) and Francis Pledge (*Correctly a William?*), a white man.

Elizabeth's parents were **Chief Donahoo** and a *Mary Wentworth*.

At least two others, Samuel Millard Marion (Charles' brother-in-law) and a Leonard S. Scott, supplied essentially the same genealogy on their applications..

Chief Donahoo: Myth or Fact?

February, 2001 draft

Conflicting stories have been written about Chief Donahoo and his descendants. Genealogy researchers continue to offer "facts" from various points of view - most always without real supporting evidence.

The Government's 1908 Position

The rejecting statement in 1908 by Guion Miller (government commissioner) of a Sarah Mashburn (a critical case) who claimed ancestry to Dohanoo through Poindexter - after the hearing of 24 claimants (including Charles Phelps) - pretty well sums up their denial: ".....There is nothing but the traditions of the family to show that Chief Donohoo was a Cherokee Indian, although it would seem from the testimony that there is a well recognized tradition in the family that he was of Cherokee blood. As against this tradition, however, are the equally well established facts that he came from Virginia, probably from the neighborhood of the James River... There is nothing in the history of the Cherokee people that I have been able to discover that would indicate that they ever occupied the section of Virginia that appears to have been the home of Chief Donohoo [further support for this point continued]...There is no intimation in the testimony that any of these descendants or their ancestors back to the time of the Revolutionary War, have been regarded as Indians, but on the contrary, the testimony clearly seems to indicate that they have been living as white people and have passed in the communities in which they have resided as white people. From the unquestioned tradition that is fully established in this large family, it would appear quite certain that there was an ancestor who was of Indian extraction, but from the history as given in the applications and in the testimony, it seems much more probable that this ancestor was a member of one of the Virginia tribes, rather than of Cherokee extraction, and certainly the application and the testimony fail to show that any of these parties or their ancestors were recognized Cherokees by blood at the time of the treaties of 1836-6 or 1846."

Two most damaging statements by two claimants were : "I never heard anything about being an Indian until this money matter came up" and "I never claimed to be an Indian until this matter came up. I had never heard that there was any Indian blood in my veins."

The Research Continues Even Today

As of February, 2001, several people are attempting to revive the history of the legal claims. The following summary is from one of those researchers, Fawn Dessy, an attorney in Bakersfield, California.

"It appears that much of the information needed to prove our Indian ties is not commonly available. As a result, few family members have any idea that Sarah Mashburn, who led the way with application no.664 for membership into the Eastern Cherokee Nation, was eventually successful in her endeavor. Sarah is listed on the 1909 Guion Miller roll under roll no.1668. I understand the Cherokee Nation rejected Sarah's application (and those of other family members) on the basis that the applicants had never been on any prior Indian roll, and had lived as whites, among other things. **I further understand that Sarah appealed this rejection to the Court of Claims, and the decision was that as long as one's Indian blood could be proven, the individual was entitled to enrollment.** It appears the Cherokee Nation appealed this decision to the Supreme Court, but that court upheld the decision of the Court of Claims. Thus, Sarah Mashburn obtained her roll number. **I have yet to view the actual rulings of both the Court of Claims and the Supreme Court in this case,/ and obtaining that documentation is one follow-up item of research that needs to be undertaken.** Although the documents in the record obtained from Salt Lake City aren't adequately noted as to the source of the documentation, it does appear

that the information I will provide includes both the original decision of the Cherokee Nation, and follow-up information as to the Court of Claims ruling.

Included in the information obtained by [an] Elizabeth Edwards in Salt Lake City is the declaration of Sarah Mashburn, executed July 14, 1908. This declaration tracks Sarah's lineage. Although Sarah claimed Indian blood through **both** parents, particular detail is given to the Poindexter line, both in Sarah's declaration and the declarations of third parties submitted in support of her claims. Further, **one of the Deloziers has executed a declaration attesting to the fact that Sarah proved Indian blood through both the Delozier and Poindexter lines.** Although, it would appear safe to say that acceptance of Sarah's position by the Court of Claims was tantamount to a determination that she had proven the Donahoo/Pledge/Poindexter connection and Indian blood of the line, by a preponderance of the evidence, I will reserve final judgment pending a review of the actual court rulings. Assuming we find that the court rulings consist of the typical summary rulings of courts acting in the appellate capacity, i.e. with use of words such as "The claimant having proved his/her position by a preponderance of the evidence, we affirm the ruling of the underlying court", then the Donahoo/Pledge/Poindexter Indian claim will not be subject to reasonable dispute. However, I would value the insights of others involved in this research project on this issue. I understand that while a such a court ruling will have a "res judicata" effect, essentially meaning it is not subject to further legal challenge, that does not equate to the absolute primary evidence some would like to find. On top of this, it does appear that Sarah's declaration is not 100% accurate, in a couple of respects. One example is that we do not believe Betty Pledge was a full- blood Cherokee (but I suppose we have no proof otherwise), but Sarah states that she was."

Charles Phelps applied only through one of Mashburn's family lines. In any event the court's settlement will not likely ever prove the Indian ancestry, but rather might support that likelihood.

Believers and Non-Believers

Here is one quote from the recent (2001) attempts to support the Donahoo claim:

"Chief Donohoo was Chief of the Snowbird Clan, one of the 5 clans of Cherokees. He was married to Mary Elizabeth Wentworth, her brothers were trappers and believed to have done business with the Indians. However, Chief Donohoo rescued Mary from a "not so friendly" tribe of Indians and married here thereafter. They had at least one daughter. Elizabeth "Betsy" Donohoo. She married William Pledge and had two children, Elizabeth "Betty" Pledge and Francis "Frank" Pledge. William thereafter married Ann Redford or Radford and had other children. According to Betsy Pledge her mother had two other children after William, since they were full blood Cherokee it is assumed that Betty went back to the reservation where she had John Ayers and Junaluska. Junaluska is the Indian chief who went to plead with President Andrew Jackson respecting the Indian removal of 1835. That is a story in itself. Ok... moving on.. William and Elizabeth's daughter, Elizabeth (that's my name too Nancy Elizabeth) married a Poindexter, one of the Poindexters, my gggggrandmother married a delozier, thus my ggggrandmother Mary Magdeline Delozier married John Ragle and she had my gg grandmother, Minnie Mabel Ragle on parched corn Indian Reservation in Cherokee County. She married a Stansbury also born on parched corn Indian reservation. My grandmother Jesse Edna Stansbury born in NC but not on the reservation married Alvin Edwards, having my mother Jayne Ragle Edwards who married my father Jerry Donald Hodges. I use the name Edwards for my last name. OK.. Now bout the money. In 1906 Minnie Mabel Ragle Stansbury made an application for the government money. Initially the claims were rejected, however, the government felt that their Indian heritage had been proven and included them on the payment list. The Cherokee Nation appealed citing various reasons why they should not be given money, including the fact that they moved away, intermarried, never lived in the traditional Indian ways, etc. The court of appeal cited that in order for an individual to receive a portion of the money they only had to prove their lineage, they did not have to show that they associated with the others in the Cherokee nation. The matter was then

appealed by the Cherokee Nation to the Supreme Court who agreed with the court of appeals. My great grandmother Minnie Mabel did in fact receive money as a result of her application. I knew this woman personally as she was in her 90's when she died. Her husband was over 100 years when he died in 1972. Her children and grandchildren were all well aware that Minnie Mabel got "Indian Money". So... your statement that there was no money is not true. The Cherokee Nation appealed the decision not because they did not think these individuals were not Cherokee, it was because they did not endure the sufferage of those who chose not to leave the Nation, who suffered, were removed, and some died for the cause of the Nation. It had nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that the individuals were not Cherokee by blood."

Still another source:

"The story is that Chief Donahoo was very friendly to the whites and even helped them with surveying some roads, etc. Mary Wentworth was captured by a hostile group of Indians and Donahoo rescued her."

Reported by Gary Elmlund, Woodbridge, VA:

There are several "tales" I've picked-up about Chief Donahoo and how he befriended the settlers, aided them against other Indians, and met Mary. They all read pretty much like the "tales" you might tell small children, but I don't discount them ... I just consider them unproven.

From Ronald Poindexter, *Poindexter Ancestry and Their Descendants Throughout the Years* 1985. (As summarized by Julie Larsen, CA):

"After a diligent search he had not found any published account of this Donahoo marriage, or had he found any records showing to whom William Pledge was married. Further, he was advised by the Virginia Historical Society that there is no published account of the marriage of Chief Donahoo or his son to a Mary Wentworth, or of the marriage of Elizabeth Donahoo to William Pledge [Charles Phelps said it was Francis Pledge]. He was further advised to dismiss this tradition as wholly unreliable."

So was was there a Cherokee Indian in my ancestry leading back from my great great grandparents Nancy Marion and Jacob Phelps? Could be.

The Donnaha Site, Yadkin County, NC

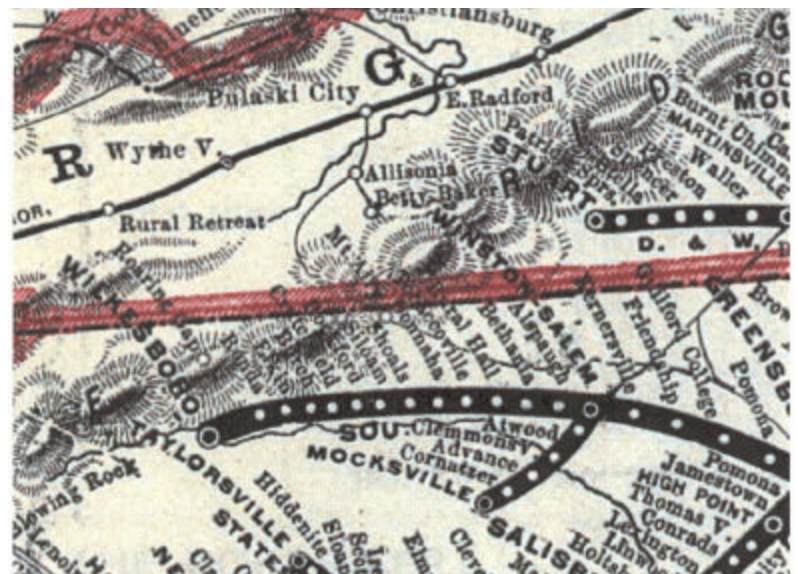
"Located on the banks of the Yadkin River in Yadkin Co., the Donnaha site contains important information concerning the early agricultural period of [North Carolina] prehistory. Excavations at the site, under the direction of Dr. J. Ned Woodall, Wake Forest University, have revealed intact cultural strata and well-preserved organic remains (rarities in the North Carolina piedmont) from a village occupied between ca. A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1500. The diet of the occupants primarily consisted of wild plants and animals, such as deer, turkey, fish, shellfish and nuts. Maize horticulture supplemented the diet, rather than being a major subsistence feature. Artifacts recovered include shell gorgets and beads, bone awls, needles and fishhooks, ceramics, projectile points, stone tools and cores. The ceramic assemblage includes Dan River, Uwharrie and Yadkin series pottery. The material used for most of the stone tools is felsite from the Carolina Slate Belt, approximately 70 Km to the southeast. Research will continue at the site in the future. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 6, 1978." by *Dolores A. Hall, NC Office of State Archaeology*

A current map of Surry County shows the town of Donnaha. "Donnoha, a community in NW Forsyth County on Yadkin River. An Indian village was at or near this place which is named for Donnahee, an Indian chief. The name was given in 1889 or 1890 by Dr. Samuel Martin of Winston, a descendant of the chief, who accompanied the surveying party which laid out the road from Winston to Wilkesboro and which passes through Donnoha. Richmond, the former seat of Surry County, 1774-89, and which was destroyed in 1830 by a cyclone, was nearby." William Powell's *NC Gazetteer*

It has been reported that according to a local, the bridge over the Yadkin River on N.C. 67 was always called the "Donnaha Bridge".



An 1897 Southern Railroad map showing Station Donnaha in the center of the map.



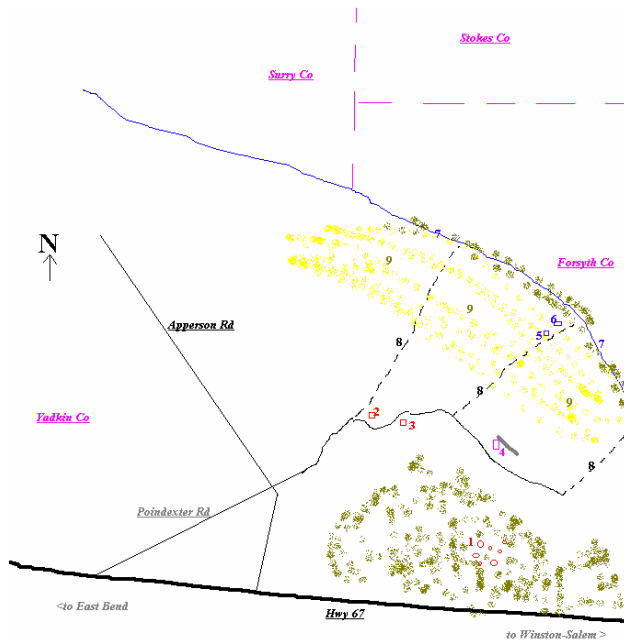
Donnaha/Poindexter Site Map and Photos

Courtesy of Dallas McClain, Gibsonville, NC

1) This is the location of the Old Poindexter Family Cemetery situated in the woods atop a hill above the river bottom. Consists of maybe 20 graves, only about 10 with engraved stones. Two Bronze tablets are placed in addition to stones on two graves.

2) A Poindexter residence (unknown at this time, but looks to be a functioning farmhouse with outbuildings.

3) Older Poindexter residence. O.V. Poindexter on mailbox. House recently underwent extensive painting and exterior work. Last stop on the road before the river bottom land.



4) This is a small shed type building with a picnic table for the members of the "RAMS AIRFIELD", a remote control model airplane club. They lease this small amount of land and have their own paved airstrip about 8 ft wide and 100 ft long. Go down the gravel road 50 feet or so past the windsock, face the woods, look uphill, and go up to the cemetery.

5) Granite marker placed on the land to give recognition to its previous owners, the first of who are listed: Native Americans, Andrew Bailie (area known as Bailie Bottoms), etc.

6) Sign erected by Wake Forest University describing the Donnaha Archeological Site. This is located about 30 feet from the granite marker, and about 100 feet from the river's edge.

7) Yadkin River along this area divides Forsyth and Yadkin Counties. Site of many ferries through the years, Styers Ferry, Martin Ferry to name a couple. Railroad lies on opposite (Forsyth bank) and is known as Donnaha station on the Norfolk

Southern Railway. No real activity, just some sidings, maybe so storage.

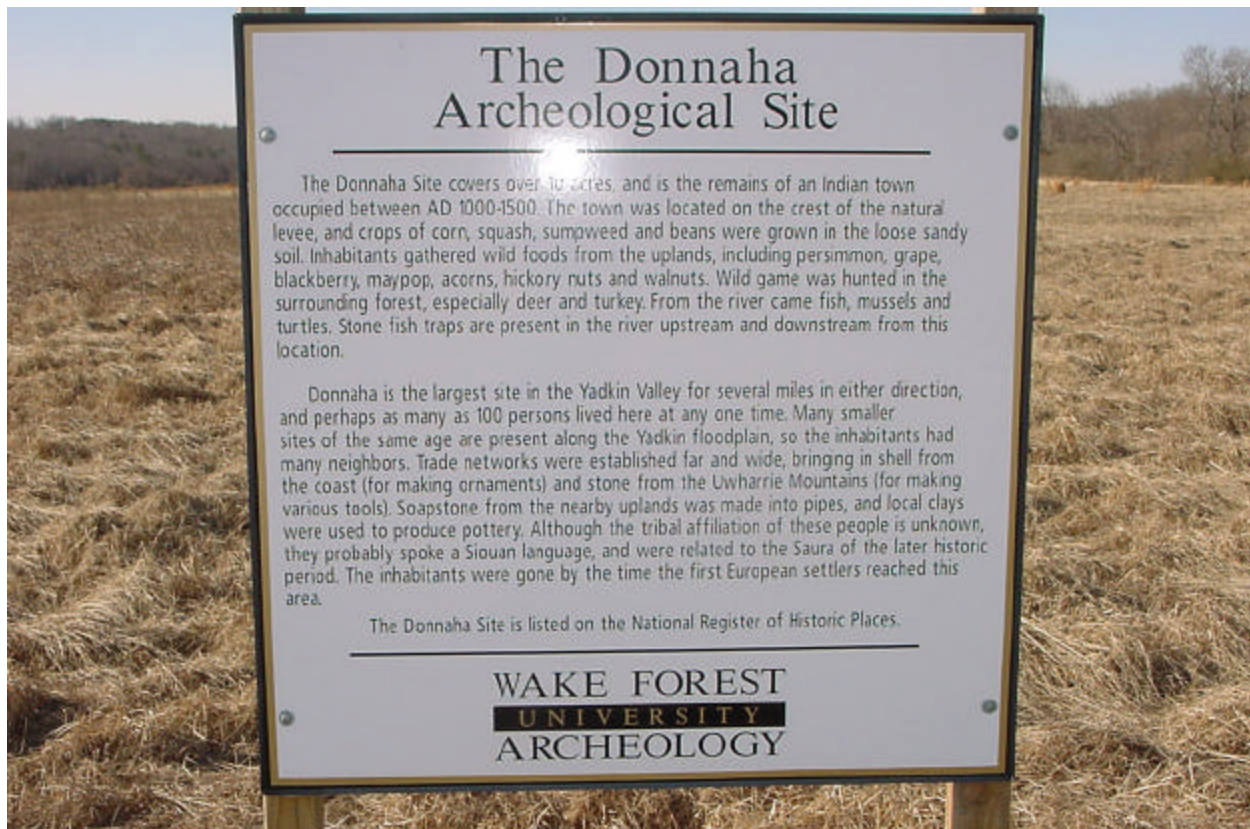
8) These are really just tractor paths through the vast cornfield area of the bottom land. The center one goes right by the granite marker and Archeological Site sign.

9) These areas are flat sandy fields (the river bottom lands) which would probably flood in very extreme conditions, but are the location of the dig site. Dig was done around 1975.

Facing North toward Surry County one can plainly see a NC landmark called Pilot Mountain, a knob like mountain which is now a state park.

Sketched Map of the Location of the Donnaha Indian Archeological Site, Old Poindexter Family Cemetery, and Surrounding Areas (see attached legend page)

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Junaluska, Cherokee Indian and a Possible Phelps Connection?

The following account of Junaluska, Cherokee Indian, written by Kathy N. Ross in a Haywood County newspaper *The Mountaineer* illustrates the very bad treatment of the Indians by the United States in the early days. It is especially interesting considering one completely undocumented source said that Junaluska was the Indian son of Elizabeth Pledge Poindexter. Elizabeth was the daughter of Chief Donahoo, as reported by Charles Phelps and would have been his 5th great grandmother. She reportedly left her white husband, Thomas Poindexter, and returned to the Indian reservation and had two boys, including Junaluska.

A mountain here was once known by his name [Junaluska], and the Methodist Assembly grounds honor him in like fashion, but the Cherokee leader Junaluska never lived in Haywood County. He did, however, affect the destiny of his people. Junaluska, or Tsunu lahunski, as the Cherokee would have known him, often said he regretted a missed opportunity, that of killing a man who would become president. In fact, Junaluska is traditionally credited with saving the life of future President Andrew Jackson during the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. The DAR has erected a tombstone in his honor at Junaluska's grave site near Robbinsville that repeats that claim. Several historical accounts of Junaluska do not describe such a rescue, but two things are certain: Cherokee fighters performed some remarkable feats to save the battle for Jackson against the Creeks during the War of 1812, and Junaluska did comment several times about that battle in his later years.

"If I had known that Jackson would drive us from our homes I would have killed him that day at the Horseshoe," he said. Jackson would be president 20 years after that battle when the Cherokee were forcibly removed from their homes in Western North Carolina, east Tennessee and northern Georgia. The Cherokee were one of five tribes forced to head west to lands in Oklahoma. Though Jackson had fought alongside the Cherokee, he was known as an Indian hater, and he supported the Treaty of New Echota that forced them west.

The legal and financial wrangling of Haywood native William Holland Thomas created what would become the Qualla Boundary, home of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee. Thomas and Junaluska were friends, according to Thomas' diaries, and sometimes traveled together.

In 1813, when the Creek Indians waged war with the British against Americans, Junaluska gathered a party of Cherokee warriors to help fight their long-standing enemies. When Jackson and the Cherokee attacked a Creek stronghold at the Horseshoe bend of the Tallapoosa River in Alabama, they found their cannons could not penetrate the log wall barriers. It was the Cherokee who swam the river, stole Creek boats, transported the rest of their warriors across and attacked from the river's side, helping to break the impasse.

"In view of the fact that Jackson had only a few weeks before been compelled to retreat before the same enemy and that two hours of artillery and rifle fire had produced no result until the Cherokee turned the rear of the enemy by their daring passage of the river, there is considerable truth in the boast of the Cherokee that they saved the day for Jackson at Horseshoe bend," wrote Cherokee historian James Mooney.

And the Cherokee came home to find their homes damaged by disorderly white troops in their absence. It took the federal government two years to agree to pay them for the damages. Junaluska did not become known by that name until after the Creek wars. First called Gul Kalaski, he had recruited fighters by a claim that they would exterminate the Creeks. Since he was not entirely successful, he told

his people “I tried but could not,” and became known as “He who tried and failed” a statement corrupted by the white tongue into “Junaluska.”

In 1838 Junaluska accompanied the Cherokee to Oklahoma. But he returned to Western North Carolina where he was allowed to stay. In 1847, North Carolina’s General Assembly granted him rights of state citizenship and granted him a tract of land, 337 acres, in what is now Graham County. The state also gave the chief \$100, all in recognition of his services in the war against Britain and the Creeks. Junaluska died in 1858, reportedly being more than 100 years old. He is buried beside his wife, Nicie. Junaluska likely traveled through the Richland Creek valley that later became Lake Junaluska, for it was a well-traveled Indian route in his day. However, he did not live in Haywood County.

In the 1800s, the mountain later known as Junaluska -- and even later as Eagles Nest -- was known as Old Field Top, according to Lake Junaluska historian Mason Crum, now deceased. The name Junaluska apparently tied itself to the mountain late in the 1800s and then to the lake built by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1912.