

Emmett York

USET President

1970 - 1971

Emmett York was chairman of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians from 1967 until his death in 1971. He was the oldest of six children born to John and Necie York in Leake County, Mississippi on May 24, 1903.

He attended school in Oklahoma and was recognized as a skilled debater. He was devoted to his people and his goal in life was to achieve full economic and social status for Indian people. He reared a family of twelve children.

Mr. York was actively associated with the tribal government for twenty-four years. He served in several different capacities, including the position of Choctaw Tribal Chairman. During his administration, he was instrumental in the development of the Choctaw Land Development Program, where he strongly promoted an active land purchase plan to provide an adequate base for future economic growth of the tribe and sponsored the planting of timber on tribal lands to increase forestry yields. He was involved in the development of a tribal court system at Choctaw with tribal police officials and judges. A strong advocate for education and children, he collaborated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for the construction of the first high school on the Choctaw reservation. Mr. York also served in a supervisory capacity for the Choctaw Youth Center and was an active supporter of the 4-H.

A nationally recognized figure, Mr. York was chosen as one of America's Outstanding Indian Leaders in 1967. He was also included in the book, *Personalities of the South*, for his outstanding leadership and contributions in various capacities.

At the time of his death on July 26, 1971, he was President of the United Southeastern Tribes, as it was known at the time. York was one of the founders and an important support of USET.

