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Turner, Hattie -  
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Interview with Ed Hicks, et al.  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

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The Ross Cemetery in the Park Hill locality had its origin in 1841, when John McDonald Ross, twenty-one year old son of Lewis Ross, died at the home of his uncle, Principal Chief John Ross, and was buried on an eminence due south of the home of the Chief. Lewis Ross erected a handsome marble monument at his son's grave, the top of the monument being broken to represent his unfinished life. He enclosed the plot in a low stone wall, which supported a high iron fence. At the middle of each of the upright iron rods was a globular ornament composed of pure lead.

In the course of time other interments were made in the private burial ground of Lewis Ross, Senior. Among those buried within the iron fence was Minerva Ross Murrell who died in 1855. Lewis Ross, about 1843, removed to a distant section of the Cherokee Nation, but in after years when he and his wife died, they were buried in the enclosed plot with their relatives. As time passed people who had no knowledge of the origin of the burial ground began to

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refer to the Lewis Ross plot as the Murrell plot, and almost generally that is the designation today.

While the Civil War was raging and the Cherokee Nation was the scene of some of its ravages, the leaden ornaments on a large portion of the iron fence were removed and utilized, it is said, in the making of bullets for the weapons of soldiers of the Confederate Indian force under command of Stand Watie. In this connection there have been some who contended that deer hunters removed the ornaments, but there have been others who personally recalled that a number of the Confederate Indians spent a portion of a day at the old burying ground and asserted that the lead was then removed.

A graduate of "the college at Princeton" (now Princeton University) in 1841, young John McDonald Ross had reached the home of his parents probably in July. He had come back to be a big man among his tribe, or so his parents hoped. Early in September he called on Chief John Ross, his uncle, fell suddenly ill, lingered awhile and died. The broken column at his grave is symbolic of the brevity of his life.

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As the years passed by many interments were made in the vicinity of the graves of the members of the family of Lewis Ross, Senior, and for some decades it was known as the Ross Cemetery.

The memoranda for this manuscript was procured in part from:

Mr. Ed Hicks, who was born at the close of the Civil War and whose address is Box 155, Tahlequah.

Mr. Shorey W. Ross, aged 65, of Park Hill.

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