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Interviewer, Elizabeth Ross,
October 25, 1937.

Interview with S. W. Ross, Park Hill.

Cherokee Physicians.

There have long been existent among the Cherokees individuals who have been referred to as doctors, some of them using roots, barks and herbs in treating their patients and some have resorted to conjuring. But during the nineteenth century there were a number of members of the Cherokee Nation who became medical doctors. These men completed their medical studies in old and long established institutions and practiced their profession, some of them before the outbreak of the Civil War.

Two of the most well known physicians of the earlier period were Dr. J. L. Thompson, and Dr. Robert D. Ross. The latter, after securing a classical education at the College of New Jersey at Princeton, New Jersey, was graduated from Jefferson Medical College at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Each of these early-day physicians practiced in the Cherokee Nation. Dr. Thompson continued his practice until

during the period of the seventies when he died. Dr. Ross died at a comparatively early age in 1864 at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and lies in the Moravian cemetery at that place. (A daughter, Miss Belle Ross, of Fort Gibson, still survives. A granddaughter, Miss Bess Howard, of the same town, whose mother was Alice Ross Howard, and the Kneeland boys, sons of Dr. Ross's youngest daughter, also live at Fort Gibson and Oklahoma City.)

Three members of early graduating classes at the National Male Seminary in the fifties of the last century became physicians. These men were Doctors Walter T. Adair, William W. Campbell, and Felix McNair. They studied and were graduated from the Missouri Medical College at St. Louis, Missouri, and practiced among the Cherokees for many years. Dr. Walter T. Adair was for some years medical superintendant of the Cherokee national seminaries, and physician for the asylum for indigent, blind and insane.

In later years a number of Cherokees studied at the Missouri Medical College and other institutions, graduated and practiced in the Cherokee Nation, and in Oklahoma upon its admission to statehood. Among those of more recent years

may be enumerated Dr. Jesse C. Bushyhead of Claremore; Dr. Charles M. Ross of Tahlequah, (deceased 1908); Dr. Emmet Starr, Claremore, whose death occurred in St. Louis, Missouri, several years ago; Dr. Bartow Fite, once of Tahlequah, now a talented surgeon in the United States Navy; Dr. R. L. Mitchell of Muskogee; Dr. Claud Thompson, once of Muskogee, deceased. Besides several whose names and places of residence are not available.

In long past years there were doctors who had not attended medical schools, but who had studied under instructions from competent practicing physicians, and some of these became capable physicians. Dr. John Brown, a noted physician of the forties and fifties of the last century, was a graduate in medicine from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and it has been said that this physician gave instruction for a considerable time to a student. There were probably several Cherokees who once studied under practicing physicians.

Dr. James F. Evans, who had been a surgeon in the period of the war with Mexico, and later in the Confederate Army,

while not a Cherokee by blood, became a citizen of the Indian Nation through intermarriage after the close of the Civil War and was for some years a practitioner in the Cherokee country; and so was Dr. W. L. Miller, once of Tahlequah, whose wife was a Cherokee, and who may be designated a Cherokee doctor to some extent.