

ROSS, S. W. . NOTABLE SCHOOL TEACHER.

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INTERVIEW

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Elizabeth Ross  
Investigator  
March 11, 1938.

Interview with S. W. Ross,  
Park Hill, Oklahoma,  
Notable School Teacher.

Isaac Brown Hitchcock was born at the original Dwight Mission, in February 1825. His parents were Jacob and Nancy Brown Hitchcock. The region in which the western Cherokees then lived is included in Pope County, Arkansas.

Jacob Hitchcock accompanied the Reverend Cephas Washburn and the Reverend Alfred Finney to the western Cherokee Nation in 1820. In that year the site for the original Dwight Mission was selected, and until the beginning of the Civil War period Jacob Hitchcock was connected with the Mission. Some years after the reestablishment of Dwight Mission on Sallisaw Creek, Jacob Hitchcock served as superintendent.

According to the testimony of Isaac Brown Hitchcock in long past years, he was not strong as a child and received instruction in his home. In more mature years he devoted himself to study and when twenty-five years of age he attended school in the Sequoyah district for three terms. Already he had engaged in school teaching. His first school was in the city of Fort Smith, Arkansas, but later he taught in the

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Cherokee Nation, and also among the Creek Indians and was for a while connected with the Presbyterian Mission at Tullahassee, in the Creek Nation. These years of teaching were before the outbreak of the Civil War.

When the Civil War was about to begin Jacob Hitchcock, with his family, removed to a northern state and there remained until the end of the conflict. His father died in Iowa before the return of Mrs. Nancy Hitchcock and Isaac Brown Hitchcock to the Indian Territory.

Isaac Brown Hitchcock was for many years engaged in school teaching in the Cherokee Nation, in the National public schools and for some time in the National male seminary, near Tahlequah, and also in the orphan institution at Salina.

The first school taught by Isaac Brown Hitchcock after the close of the Civil War was at Fort Gibson. It is possible that there are yet living a few old men and women who as children attended the Fort Gibson school when Professor Hitchcock (as he was often called) was in charge. One of these men whom it is definitely known was among his pupils is Thomas Jefferson Parris, now eighty-six years of

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age, who is living in the Park Hill locality. After resuming school duties, beginning with the Fort Gibson school, Professor Hitchcock taught various schools in several districts of the Cherokee Nation, and during that period was a member of the faculty of the National Male Seminary and of the Orphans' Home. In referring to his long career as a teacher, Professor Hitchcock sometimes related that he had taught in four states and one Territory, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri and Arkansas, and the Indian Territory. Nearly a half century of the lifetime of Professor Hitchcock was spent in teaching.

Besides his success as an instructor in the schools, Professor Hitchcock was an accomplished singer and often assisted in the vocal music in church and Sunday school. During many years he was a member of the Presbyterian church and at times did missionary work on his own account. In school he advised his pupils to aim high and he was one of the most capable instructors employed in the Cherokee Nation.

In the latter years of his lifetime, of eighty-four years, Professor Hitchcock was usually referred to as

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"Uncle Isaac". He was quite active until within a short while before his death and liked to visit with his numerous friends throughout the regions once embraced in the Cherokee Nation. Because of his long period of residence among the Cherokees and the fact that his boyhood days were spent in a region where the native Indians were numerous, Isaac Brown Hitchcock was quite familiar with the Cherokee language and spoke it with precision. He could sing hymns in the Cherokee language, and could also write it using the characters of the Sequoian alphabet.

Isaac Brown Hitchcock was married several years before the beginning of the Civil War to Miss E. Ann Duncan a sister of Reverend Walter A. Duncan, a prominent Methodist minister of the Cherokee Nation.