

MEIGS, R. R.

SEVENTH INTERVIEW
MEIGS HOUSE.

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Investigator
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Interview with
R. R. Meigs
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

THE MEIGS HOUSE

The Park Hill locality, some four miles south of Tahlequah, was a place of early settlement and for a number of years several houses built in the first years of the thirties of the last century were to be seen. All such houses, with one exception, have gradually disappeared.

The house which yet stands is that which was known to the older people of the locality as the Meigs House. Completion of the building was made in 1834 by a member of the Western Cherokee band or Nation, and upon the arrival of R. J. Meigs and his wife in 1839 from the original Cherokee country east of the Mississippi River, the original owner sold the house and other improvements and thereafter Mr. Meigs and his family occupied the home. Like the majority of the larger and more substan-

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tial houses of the early days, the Meigs home was built of large logs, hewed to required thickness by skillful workmen, and the roof was covered with hand-made boards. In course of time the log walls were covered over with plank, and though more than one hundred years have passed since completion of the building it is yet in an excellent state of preservation.

At each end of the house are large chimneys. The fireplaces originally were approximately four feet in width and large quantities of wood were consumed during the winter season. In connection with the great stone chimney at the west end of the Meigs house is preserved a story of the Civil War period.

On a day when a band of marauders swooped down on the settlement in the locality, Robert Meigs, a youth of about 17 years, was in the house which was suddenly surrounded by a number of men, all armed, some of whom entered the house. Fearing that he would be shot down in case he was discovered, he climb-

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ed up inside the big chimney and managed to gain foothold on projecting stones. There he remained in an uncomfortable position, smoke arising from a smouldering fire below. But he retained his hold and after some time heard the party riding away and descended safely. Flames which had been kindled against the house on the outside were extinguished, saving the building from destruction.

R. J. Meigs left his home in 1850 with the intention of going to California for the purpose of hunting gold, in company with a number of other men from the Cherokee Nation. But he died near the boundary of Nevada and Utah Territories. Weeks later intelligence of his death was received by his family and other relatives.

In the vicinity of the old Meigs house are a number of trees which the earlyday settlers referred to as "trees of heaven". These trees are not native in this section and it has been related that the original trees were brought from the "old nation." Some

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of the Cherokee people are said to have believed that the new country to which they were to be removed was a treeless region and consequently a number of "trees of heaven" were brought to Indian Territory and today (1937) some of these trees are of very large size.

Unless destroyed by fire or storm the oldest Park Hill home may stand for many years to come.