

of the old generations did not want to talk about their tragic lives, having experienced the Removal from the East. Hardly had they begun to get settled in the Indian Territory when the Civil war brought despair again. Two tragic events in twenty years were things they wished to forget. Then in the lifetime of many, the advent of Statehood wiped out the Cherokee Nation forever. As Ross says, the present generation of young people do not know much about their peoples. They do not know and they do not think. For many of the younger Indians life is just existing with little or no hope to look forward to. Many feel the oppression, the resentment of whites, and the hopelessness. With no land to call their own as a people, a government that has turned its back to the Indian, and the plying of whiteman influence has destroyed much of the Indian. Many of the changes are accepted with a shrug of the shoulder, and the expression in their eyes seem to say "we have nothing to lose, now." One of Ross' grandmothers was Betsy Christie, who was 14 years old when she came to Indian Territory on the Trail of Tears, and the bitterness she lived with was not caused from that cold winter, but of the treatment at the hands of the white people. After Ross' mother died he stayed with his grandmother Christie for a while. He remembers that she would talk to the children at night by the fire place. He remembered somethings, but does not tell. Also, Jack Bluebird would come there to visit and tell stories of the old days.

He says that there were many Indians living in his Snake Creek and Spring Creek country long ago, but the government helped them sell their land and heritage for a mess of pottage, and now the Indians who still live here have very little, and others have moved away to try for something a little better.

As a boy Ross attended different schools in his home area. First he went to Smith Chapel School, then to Victory where Willie Proctor was the teacher, and to Dragger School where Homer Grubb taught. Iron Post and Little Rock schools did not come until much later. While still a young boy Ross was sent to Chillicothe Indian School. He stayed there a few years but finally tired of the 'better than thou' attitude of the white people and returned to his native home. Ross studied at home and entered the ministry. Now he is pastor of the Snake Creek Church where he preaches in two languages to his Indian congregation.