

Speaking on old burial places, Mrs. Ross says that the Cherokees wish to be buried with their families. Regardless of how far they might be away from their people, they do want to be brought back for burial near their family. Family ties among Indians are very strong, and they wish to be together in the next world.

Mrs. Ross says that her people were from the Watts community on the eastern side of the Cherokee Nation. Joseph Thompson was her father, and Watt Belt was her grandfather.

While the Cherokee Nation was being developed and still under its own laws and government, her home area was generally known as the Saline District which embraced all of the country bordering Saline Creek. The Families of Ross, Kingfisher, Vanh, Blossom, Pickup, and Sixkiller were the most prominent. Many descendants also came from the Pigeons, Mixwater, Squirrel, Blackfox, Bird, and Rider families. Long ago there was a half-Cherokee and half-Mexican who came to the Saline District by name of Joe Hosea. He had come from that small group of Cherokees who left their Arkansas homes in 1819 to resettle between the Trinity and Sabine Rivers in east central Texas, where again the Indians were oppressed and driven from their homes.

Mrs. Ross comments on the sad fact that Indian owned lands and especially their land allotments are fast being consumed by outsiders. She says she does not know in her community of any Indians who still have their original land allotment. It seems such a pitiful state of affairs that an Indian has to dispose of his land in order to receive welfare assistance. Untold amounts are being spent to preserve Indian culture, traditions, and heritage, and yet other hands are rapidly closing him out of his homelands. No more does the Indian have woods to hunt or streams to fish as did his fathers. No longer is he able to enjoy the freedom of the hills and plains. The nightmare of whiteman strong fences and endless "No trespass" signs he does