

Coowee Meigs is a descendant of Chief John Ross. He lives with a daughter near the old Ross cemetery. This community dates its settlement from 1839 when the Ross family settled here after being removed from Georgia. A son of John Ross was buried in the family cemetery here in 1841.

In the partial shade of Parkhill mountain, Coowee has spent all of his life as a farmer and woodsman. He has seen and known the many people who have lived here come and go, he watched the town of Parkhill grow up and then die down; he remembers the Cherokee Female Seminary and saw it burn, and in his time, has seen the white man take over the Cherokee Nation.

Mr. Meigs is among the more fortunate senior citizens of this day, as he busies himself in a little shop where he makes bows and arrows--the bows from bois d'arc and the arrows from black locust. He also makes gig poles up to 12 feet long. The quality of his work is commendable and he has a ready outlet for his handicrafts. He does this work only as a hobby and works only with a few hand tools.

Beside his shop is one of the old flat bottom boats, that was once in common use on the Illinois River when people used to enjoy gigging fish. The white man came and told the Indian he cannot gig his fish anymore, so the old boat is left to rot and be only a memory of once happy days. Coowee showed some of his excellent bows and other works. He has even made bow strings. For these, he uses old tough fox squirrel hides, and they are not subject to stretching as some of the other materials.

He points to a little grove of trees over toward the river where he was born in a log house. The old house is gone now, but he remembers when as a boy they farmed the valley on the north side of the mountain. He likes to remember when his family would load up in the wagon and go eight or ten miles away to visit relatives and friends and stay a day or two.