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A CHEROKEE SOLDIER

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12231.

Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
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An Interview with S. W. Ross,
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

A CHEROKEE SOLDIER.

Tilden Hayes, a Cherokee, who enlisted in the United States Army, expecting to serve in the Philippine Islands, was stricken with illness while temporarily in the Hawaiian Islands and after some days succumbed to the malady with which he was afflicted.

As a youth bearing a Cherokee name, Tilden Hayes, as he came to be called, attended the Cherokee Baptist Academy established at Tahlequah by Professor Almon C. Bacone at the beginning of the eighties of the last century. It has been said by persons who were familiar with the circumstances that the name was that suggested by the instructors in the Academy and was adopted by the youth. He ever afterward was known as Tilden Hayes and so signed his name.

After spending several years in school, Tilden Hayes worked at various tasks, in Tahlequah and elsewhere. For some time he served as engineer at a sawmill in the Cherokee Mills, in a region where there was a considerable section covered with yellow pine trees. Lumber sawed at the mill

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where Tilden Hayes was employed was often hauled to distant localities over the narrow and rugged mountain roads.

When trouble arose with Spain, and the United States Army was being increased Tilden Hayes was among a number of volunteers who enlisted at Tahlequah. Soon Hayes became noted as a marksman. In a contest in which the men fired at a target while running at full speed, he made the highest score, mention of which was made in newspaper stories of the period. The regiment in which he was a member reached the Philippines eventually, but he was then dead and resting in the United States Cemetery in Hawaii.

Cherokees have served in all the wars in which the United States has engaged from the time of the Revolutionary struggle and it is possible that among the Cherokee soldiers of long past years was some relative or ancestor of Tilden Hayes the first member of his nation to be interred in the soil of the Hawaiian Islands.

Several of the older people of Tahlequah and of the former Cherokee districts, such as Tahlequah, Flint, Going-snake, and perhaps others remember Tilden Hayes as a quiet and industrious young man.

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When not away from Tahlequah, he was usually in the town, where lived a number of his friends and acquaintances as well as former students of the Cherokee Baptist Academy.