

ROSS, S. W.

INTERVIEW

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Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
Dec., 1, 1937.

An Interview With S. W. Ross,
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

STANDING ROCK.

The standing Rock in Cherokee County is a great gray bluff which overlooks a portion of the Illinois River in the Cookson township. The name was given many years ago, the exact date being unknown. Likewise unknown is the name of the person who first applied the designation, which is quite appropriate.

Quite a number of fullblood Cherokees once lived in localities outlying from the big bluff, some on the east side and others on the west side of the river. In the earlier periods there was much wild game among the valleys of the hills and in the unbroken woodlands. Also there were many wild hogs, descendants of hogs brought by early settlers in probability. Not until comparatively recent years did the wild hogs become practically extinct.

The waters of the Illinois are deep below the bluff. Several years ago some men are related to have fastened two of the longest gig poles end to end with which to measure

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the depth of the deep blue water at a point near the bluff, as a result it was found that the water was thirty-two feet deep.

There is a spot beneath the waters, according to some of those who have fished or gigged near the Standing Rock, where the waters from subterranean springs or pools below the bottom of the river, flow upward into the deep water of the river, and in the winter time large numbers of fish congregate where the warmer water enters the stream, many feet beneath the surface of the river.

The waters of the Illinois in vicinity of Standing Rock have long been noted for the large number of fish found there. The fish are of several varieties, the largest of which are catfish. Specimens weighing from thirty to more than fifty pounds, have been caught from time to time within recent years. In bygone years some of the largest catfish seen anywhere in the Illinois were found and caught in instances in the Standing Rock water. Numerous buffalo fish ^{were} once found, as also drum and smaller varieties. When dynamite was used in slaying fish some years ago, the damage to all varieties of fish was great and for awhile the

Standing Rock section of the river was not as populous with fish as in earlier periods when no one thought of using explosives in fishing. But within recent years the fishing has been quite satisfactory, though increasingly large numbers of fishermen visit the Standing Rock section each year.

The Standing Rock region is picturesque and was long greatly isolated, those who visited the place traveling over the narrow paths through the valleys and forests. Long ago the canoes of the native Cherokees were to be seen in the Illinois in vicinity of the rugged bluff when numbers of fish were being caught for the purpose of being served at largely attended barbecues.

Now living are a few of the fishermen of old Indian Territory days who recall periods when the fishing in vicinity of Standing Rock was better in some ways, than perhaps, at any other point along the Illinois.