

ROSS, S. W.

INTERVIEW

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Elizabeth Ross
Investigator
March 1, 1938.

Interview with S. W. Ross
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

One of the oldest homes in the Park Hill section, in the vicinity where once stood the early-day Park Hill Mission, was the residence of the Reverend Stephen Foreman. The Reverend Stephen Foreman arrived in the year 1879, having conducted a detachment of Cherokees from the old Cherokee Nation to the Indian Territory, at the time of the removal West. As the Reverend Stephen Foreman was selected by the Reverend Samuel A. Worcester to assist in translations, it was necessary that he live near the scene of his employment.

The Foreman house was built of native lumber and was different from all other houses in the neighborhood, in that the two large rooms on the first floor could be made into a single room when occasion required, by the use of folding doors. Besides the large rooms there were two smaller rooms downstairs, and a porch which extended the full length of the house on the east side. Upstairs were two rooms. There was an open fireplace at the end of the north room, and a tall brick chimney. In a corner of the rear porch of the home stood a well curb. The well was at least ninety feet deep, it was said, and had been dug near the house for convenience, and was at length enclosed under the roof of the porch. There was a windlass, a long rope,

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and a large oaken bucket in which water was drawn to the top of the well. At a short distance from the residence were out-buildings including a barn, and granary.

In this home lived the Reverend Stephen Foreman and his family until some time after the beginning of the Civil War, when they moved to a less disturbed and dangerous section. But immediately after the War was ended the family returned and again occupied the home. Here the Reverend Stephen Foreman spent the remaining sixteen years of his lifetime, and here Mrs. Ruth Foreman, his widow, died in January, 1866.

After the burning of the Park Hill Presbyterian Mission School, which was maintained in the old Park Hill Church, a wooden building, school work was continued for a while in the north room of the Foreman residence. Eventually, all surviving members of the family removed to a distant section, and later the home was owned by other people and in course of time the building was entirely destroyed by fire.

Some years after the decease of the Reverend Stephen Foreman and his wife there was an old man living in the residence who had small appreciation of valuable papers and documents. In a small upper room there were stored piles of old records, papers, manuscripts and books. The old man in charge of the home had grown a consider-

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able quantity of tobacco, and one day in seeking a place in which to store away the leaf tobacco, he entered the small upper room. He found it well filled with various printed and written materials and decided that they were worthless. So, he carried these papers out-of-doors, piled them up and applied a match and soon nothing remained of them except a small pile of ashes. But, a satisfactory place for storing the "home made" tobacco had been found and utilized. Another house now stands on the site of the old foreman home, and water is yet drawn from the old well, which was completed in the pioneer days of the Cherokee.