

ROSS, S. W.

TENTH INTERVIEW

PRAIRIE LEA #12159

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Elizabeth Ross,
Interviewer,
Nov. 15, 1937.

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

Prairie Lea.

A picturesque home of the early days of the Cherokee Nation in the Park Hill locality was that which was once called "Prairie Lea." ~~During several years~~ the house was occupied by Lewis Ross, a brother of the Principal Chief of the Cherokees. When Lewis Ross removed to the Saline District in the early forties of the last century (the 19th), he presented the house and other property to his daughter, Mrs. Araminta R. Vann, who lived there for a rather brief period. Hereafter the home passed to another owner and during the years has had a number of owners.

This pioneer home was built after the early day fashion of hewn logs, heavy and enduring. A large gray limestone chimney stood between the two spacious rooms, being what is known as a "stack chimney." Upon the level lawn stood a number of fine forest trees, most of which long ago disappeared. Not far from the home flowed the Park Hill branch or creek, a stream which in the early days was noted for

its numerous fish. There were several deep pools, overhung with the limbs of oaks and willows, where the fish were especially numerous. One of the spots most often visited by the boys of the decade of the forties was designated as the "Black Rock," there being an outcropping of slate rock at the brink of the stream on its north side. There were also pools in which the boys swam in the summer time, when the waters of the stream were more free flowing than in later times, when the trampling of livestock caused gravel to obstruct the current.

There were several of the early-day park hill homes which bore distinctive names in the time long past. The term, "Prairie Lea" was given, no doubt, by reason of the fact that the spot upon which the house stood was in the vicinity of an open stretch of prairie just across the stream on its north side. Between the open and grassy land and the home were a number of trees, elms, sycamores, willows and oaks.

The house stood for many years, but at the beginning of the eighties of the last century it was demolished and a smaller house constructed. In these days (1937) the big stone chimney yet stands and its wide fireplace is utilized.