

ROSS, S. W.

EIGHTH INTERVIEW
HISTORICAL BRICKS

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

Historical Bricks.

A building in Tahlequah, often referred to as the "old Methodist Church," now the property of the Church of Christ, contains bricks which are 81 years of age, though the church was built in Tahlequah 49 years ago.

The church, the corner stone of which was laid in August, 1888, is composed of bricks which were originally used in the erection of Sehon Chapel in the Park Hill locality. That building was completed in 1856. It stood upon its original site for a period of 32 years when it was completely demolished and the bricks were hauled to Tahlequah, some four miles distant, cleaned of adhering mortar, and used in building the Tahlequah Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Following the completion of the church in Tahlequah, the Reverend Joseph Shanks being the pastor,

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the building was owned and utilized by the denomination for a number of years. Besides the Reverends, Joseph, Edward and Thomas Shanks, brothers, who served as pastor at intervals, a number of other ministers have filled the pulpit in years long past, including the Reverend J. J. Lovett, Joseph F. Thompson, A. S. J. Hunkapillar, T. E. Martin and others.

In the belfry below the tall steeple was hung the original bell of the old Sehon Chapel and in the beginning the seats were those which had been placed in the old chapel upon its completion some five years before the beginning of the Civil War.

A number of largely attended revival meetings were held from time to time in the Tahlequah church; among those who preached there in some of the revivals being the Reverend John P. Lowery of Little Rock, Arkansas.

After the passage of a number of years a larger church building was desired by a number of the members of the denomination and finally a new site was acquired and erection of a larger building begun. Upon complet-

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ion of this building, which is the present church of the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of Tahlequah, the former church was abandoned as a house of worship by the Methodists, and a few years ago the building and the grounds were acquired by the Church of Christ.

The bricks in the former Methodist Church were molded and burned in a kiln nearly a half mile northwest of the site of the Sehon Chapel. Numerous broken portions of brick may be found at the location of the old brick kiln. A pond nearby is the result of the excavation made in procuring the proper clay for molding into bricks.

The church in Tahlequah stood, when completed in 1888, in near vicinity of the original burying ground, but within a relatively brief period of time further interments were forbidden by town ordinances and eventually a new cemetery was established in which reinterments were made.

Church bells have not been in use at Tahlequah during a number of years; consequently the bell which

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was first rung in 1856 is heard no more. No other church in this section of Oklahoma is composed of building material which was once used in a former church.

The old church here is in appearance remindful of the former Sehon Chapel as to length, width and height, but in these days (1937) the spire or steeple, is missing, having been removed some years ago.