

ROSS, S. W.

TWENTIETH INTERVIEW. "6809"

279

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#6609.

Elizabeth Ross, Interviewer.

July 12, 1937.

Early Day Teacher.

Buried in the original Park Mill graveyard, now often referred to as the "Old Mission graveyard", is Caleb Covell, who was born in 1817 and died at Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, September 22, 1850. The inscription upon the Covell headstone says that he was from Boston, Massachusetts, which is erroneous, as he was a native of Portland, Maine, according to the statement of his oldest daughter.

Member of a ship-building family at Portland, Caleb Covell twice sailed around the world in his rather early lifetime. From China he brought some beautiful china tableware, specimens of which are said yet to be in possession of descendants.

The frail constitution of Caleb Covell's young wife caused him to seek a milder climate and he journeyed with her to the Indian Territory. At Park Mill, Caleb Covell met the Reverend Samuel A. Worcester, missionary to the Cherokees, and being in need of a teacher at the Dwight Mission on Sallisaw (Salaison) Creek, the young man was

ROSS, S. W.      TRENTIETH INTERVIEW.      #6609.

2

employed for awhile in that capacity.

The health of the young Mrs. Covell failed to improve and she died some time after reaching the Cherokee Nation.

Caleb Covell eventually married again, his wife being Eliza Turtle, a full blood Cherokee girl who had attended Dwight Mission as a pupil. Caleb Covell, his second wife and their three small children, two daughters and a son, established their home at Tahlequah. The Northeastern State Teachers College is now situated on the site of the house in which once lived the Covell family. At a later period the same site was occupied - at least a portion was - by the home of James Hendricks, once a judge of the old Tahlequah district. When the Cherokee National Female Seminary was destroyed by fire at Park Hill in 1887, the Hendricks property was purchased by business men of Tahlequah and donated as the site of the new female seminary, now the main building of the college.

The health of Caleb Covell failed after a few years and in 1850 he died at his home at the border of the woodland which stretched away for miles northward and eastward. Present

ROSS, S. W. THE TIELE INTERVIEW.

#6609.

3

during the closing hours of Caleb Covell's life was the Reverend Walter A. Duncan, a young Methodist minister, afterward prominent in educational work in the Cherokee Nation. Those who sat beside the body of Caleb Covell were startled in the darkness of the night when a panther screamed in the outlying woodland.

Interment was made at Park Hill. The funeral services were conducted, so far as known by the Reverends Samuel A. Worcester and Stephen Foreman. A well-executed headstone of gray limestone was placed at the grave, the handiwork of John Watt, a Scottish stone mason, once well-known in the Cherokee Nation. The grave of Caleb Covell is near that of the Reverend Samuel A. Worcester.

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Note: Mr. S. W. Ross gave the above information as it was told to him by Mrs. Mary Covell Holdermen and the Reverend Walter A. Duncan, both of whom are now deceased.