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INTERVIEW.

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Elizabeth Ross,  
Investigator,  
Jan. 26, 1938.

Interview With R. R. Meigs,  
Park Hill, Oklahoma.

## ROSE COTTAGE.

"Rose Cottage" a beautiful and historic home, once stood in the old Park Hill locality. The cottage, as it was usually called, though some have referred to it as a mansion, was the home for some twenty years of John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokees.

When John Ross and his young son arrived from the old Nation east of the Mississippi River in 1839, his wife having died on the journey west, at Little Rock, Arkansas, he found in the Park Hill locality a suitable site for a home. This site was near a road which led from the east through the neighborhood. It was occupied by a log house one and one-half stories in height. There was an open passageway between the lower rooms. This house had been built and was occupied by an early settler, a member of the Western Cherokee group which had preceded by ten years

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the Eastern Cherokees to Indian Territory. The name of this "old settler" is not now known, but he was willing to sell his home and improvements to John Ross. The latter immediately occupied the log house, together with John G. Ross and wife, and their children.

In a few years the new and larger home which came to be called "Rose Cottage", was completed in the near vicinity of the site of the old log house, which was then removed. It was before the close of 1843 that the new house was completed, according to the recollections of old residents in past years. It has been said that the name "Rose Cottage" <sup>was</sup> derived from the many roses which then bloomed in the summer season upon the lawn. And there were clinging rose vines about the trellises.

A famous guest of John Ross who occupied an upper room of the older house was John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home". During four months toward the close of 1840 and until the beginning of 1841 Mr. Payne remained in the home, guest of the Principal Chief. The friendship of the two men had begun in 1835, in the old Nation in Georgia.

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In the year 1844 an artist and painter of considerable distinction spent some weeks at "Rose Cottage". This was J. M. Stanley, a native of Detroit, Michigan, who completed a number of portraits and western scenes, some of them at Fort Gibson, in 1843. In these days (1938) several of the portraits completed by Stanley at the John Ross home are preserved at places in Cherokee County.

"Rose Cottage" was situated at the border of a woodland and outlying were stretches of prairie, with here and there groves of elms. In the near vicinity of the home were a number of old and stately elms, a few of which yet remain near the spot where once stood the home.

During the years of its existence "Rose Cottage" was one of the notable homes of the Park Hill locality and of the Cherokee Nation. The house was two-stories in height with a two-storied extension on the south with a full length porch. In front, facing the north was a pillared portico, and at each end were large chimneys of cut stone. Inside were guest rooms, family rooms, library and parlor, furnished with rosewood and mahogany furniture. There was also a blacksmith shop, a laundry, a dairy and

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other needed buildings. There were cabins for slaves, of whom it is said Chief Ross owned a large number. Orchard and gardens were near by, and nearly everything in the way of food used in the home was raised on the large farm.

Chief Ross had married in 1844, Miss Mary Brian Stapler, a young woman from Wilmington, New Jersey, whom he had met while on a trip east to place some boys in a school. Miss Stapler was then in a boarding school. At the time of their marriage Miss Stapler was aged seventeen years and Chief Ross was fifty-five. Their union proved to be a very happy one.

Ross' Cottage" stood until the night of October 23, 1863, when it was totally destroyed by fire. This fire is referred to in a letter dated November 12, 1863, written by Stand Watie, commander of the Confederate Indians, to his wife. Concerning a visit to Tahlequah, Stand Watie says: "Killed a few Pines in Tahlequah. They had been holding council. I had the old Council House set on fire and burned down, also John Ross's house." (At Park Hill).

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A great grandson of Chief Ross, John Henry Meigs, aged four years, with his mother was living at Rose Cottage at the time and recalls the burning of the home. Mr. Meigs, now in his seventy-ninth year lives at Fort Gibson.