

DUNCAN, J. E. (MRS.)

GRASS CEMETERY.

12737.

343

DUNCAN, J. E. (MRS.)

GRASS CEMETERY

12737.

James R. Carselowey,
Journalist,
January 19, 1938.

A Historical Indian Church And Cemetery

The following article came from Mrs. J. E. Duncan of Rose and was taken from an old paper edited by William Randolph Harper, who died several years ago in Claremore.

Mr. Harper formerly edited papers at Choteau, Salina and Claremore. He was of Cherokee blood and married a full blood Cherokee, who had received her education at the Cherokee Orphan Asylum located where Salina now is.

Rose, Oklahoma, where Mrs. Duncan lives, was once a part of Saline District, Cherokee Nation.

In the course of our rambles a few days ago, we ran on to something interesting a few miles east of Salina, and not far from Saline Creek. It is an old Cherokee Indian Cemetery, or burying ground, commonly called the Grass Cemetery, it being located near the ancestral home of the Grass family, well known Cherokees.

We must hand it to our full blood friends on the good condition in which this sacred plot is kept. Years ago an

~~old man named Oo-ka-lunt (Rider) Gah-nu-lah (Grass), Rider~~

DUNCAN, J. E. (MRS.)

GRASS CEMETERY,

12737.

- 2 -

Grass, lived near and found his last resting place there among friends and kindred who had gone before. Rider Grass carried mail from Spavinaw to the Cherokee Orphan Asylum, now Salina, for many years.

The Grass cemetery consists of one square acre, which is surrounded by a good fence, and the grounds are kept free from grass and weeds better than most other cemeteries are kept. There are fifty or sixty graves in the plot-some have nice marble head stones, others native stone, others native stone or wood markers, and 90 percent of the inscriptions are in the Cherokee language-some have both English and Cherokee.

We found the grave of one of our friends, Reverend Dick Rowe, a full blood Baptist preacher, who lived on part of his allotment, now in the east part of Salina, still occupied by his widow. Reverend Rowe died in 1917.

It will be remembered that a number of Cherokee families from Georgia settled on Salina Creek about 1818, nearly a quarter of a century before the main body of the tribe came west-when Salina was still a French-Osage trading post, and this old cemetery probably dates back to that time.

DUNCAN, J. E. (MRS.)

GRASS CEMETERY

12737.

- 3 -

"NOY-YAH-DE-GAH-TAW-KAH"

Standing Rock

Another historical institution near-by is Noy-yah-De-gah-taw-keh, or Standing Rock, Full blood Cherokee Baptist Church, where regular services, preaching, singing and praying have been conducted in the musical language of the Cherokee ever since a time when the minds of men ran not to the contrary.

It is a saying far and near, that religious services are always well attended "by Indians" at Standing Rock, and the best of order always prevails. Indians never "cut-up" at meetings. If anyone should happen to "start anything" he would be attended to promptly and on the spot.

This church takes its name from an interesting and peculiar geological formation nearby—a massive boulder, or column of solid flint, about six feet in diameter, and nearly thirty feet high. Early settlers named, or as the Indians say, nicknamed, it Chimney Rock, but in the musical language of the Cherokees it is "Noy-yah—" a rock, and "De-gah-taw-keh" or standing up, liberally translated "Standing Rock."