

ROSS, ELIZABETH. THE CHIEF'S SAUSAGE GRINDER. 12612

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Elizabeth Ross,
Investigator,
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Narrative of Elizabeth Ross
On
The Chief's Sausage Grinder.

A relic of the olden time is a rather heavy, steel sausage grinder, which once belonged to John Ross, the Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation. The grinder, now in possession of a descendant of the Chief in the Park Hill community, was used in the old nation east of the Mississippi River some years before the removal west of the Cherokees.

Many of the people of the Cherokee Nation carried articles and utensils with them when they started out on their way to Indian Territory in the Fall of 1838. Some of them lost portions of their belongings along the route of travel but others managed to retain most of that with which they had started. During the many years which have passed since the arrival in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma, many objects of utility have been lost, but occasionally some relic which recalls past and eventful times is found. The old sausage grinder is such a relic.

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The sausage grinder recalls a period in the old nation beyond the Mississippi when numbers of the people gave attention to the raising of hogs and used the meat, as is done in these more modern days of 1938. But, before the use of hog meat came into use by the less conservative portion of the people, there was a time when large numbers were decidedly opposed to pork, bacon, sausage or lard. Those so opposed adhered to the belief in ancient customs and in such articles of diet as their forefathers had used. The hog was long unpopular for food purposes. The principal reason was the belief that any person who used the meat of the hog partook of the nature of that animal; that is, became sluggish and slow of motion. The meat of the wild deer was extensively used because the deer is a quick-motioned and alert animal, whereas the hog and ox and cow are slow and often sleepy. Adhering to such beliefs, the conservatives were long reluctant in utilizing the meat of the hog as an article of diet. But as years passed, the wild game became very scarce and so eventually the most conservative of the full-blood or the native element became users of hog meat.

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According to the narratives of travelers among the Cherokees in years long past there was a prevailing custom among the more improvident members of the Indian nation to make frequent visits to the more well-to-do citizens and to eat and drink (and sleep) at the latter's expense. This custom is still practiced to more or less extent among the full-bloods of today, 1938. Though not only the well-to-do are visited, but those also in poor circumstances. Year in and year out there were guests who dropped in for their meals. Their hosts necessarily were compelled to raise large quantities of farm and garden products, as well as sheep, cattle and hogs. When a number of hogs had been butchered, the sausage grinders were placed in operation and large quantities of sausage ground and stored away. The knowledge that this or that wealthy or well-to-do citizen had abundance of pork and sausage on hand no doubt resulted in a number of calls at or near the dinner hour, or any other hour for meals.

The old sausage grinder, which was brought to the Park Hill section ninety-nine years ago, is in a good

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state of preservation and as capable of grinding meat
into sausage, as "back in the old nation."