

ROSS, ELIZABETH BIG PERJIMMON TREL. 12615

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

ROSS, ELIZABETH - BIG PERSIMMON TREE.

12615

Field worker's name Elizabeth Ross

This report made on (date) January 6, 1939 1939

1. This legend was secured from (name) S. W. Ross

Address Park Hill, Oklahoma.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story _____

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 4

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Ross, Elizabeth - Investigator.
Indian Pioneer History-S-149.
January 6, 1938.

Interview with S. W. Ross
Park Hill, Oklahoma

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Big Persimmon Tree.

One of the largest and tallest persimmon trees, in what is now Cherokee County, stood for unknown years near the banks of the Illinois River, about two miles northeast of the Park Hill postoffice. The tree was in the low-lying bottom land, about two hundred yards north of a rocky bluff on the south. That its age was very great was evidenced by its unusual height and size.

Old residents of the locality bordering upon the Illinois River recalled of having noticed the big persimmon tree in the early years of the Tablequah district of the Cherokee Nation. In all probability the tree would have stood during many years of the future had it not been felled before the year of 1936. The trunk was sawn into three sections so that it could be hauled to a sawmill. At a distance of two feet from the ground, the stump of the old persimmon tree measured twenty-four inches in diameter. Two

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logs, each of which measured fourteen feet in length, and a third sixteen feet in length were secured from the trunk. The upper portion, more slender and covered with limbs, was not used, but its length, added to that of the three logs, approximated sixty-five feet. A persimmon tree sixty-five feet in height is very unusual. This tree stood alone, no other tree of the specie being in its vicinity.

In the place where the limbs of this tree divided into a fork, nearly fifty feet above the ground, a large nest built by a hawk was visible for a considerable period. This nest was built of slender sticks and remained unaffected by weather conditions during several seasons.

In the vicinity of the persimmon tree the ground lay level and smooth, covered in the spring and summertime with green grass; that is, in earlier years. In this grassy spot, beneath the shade of the large elm and hackberry trees was once a picnic ground, sometimes referred to as the "old May party ground", for the reason that the students of the Cherokee high schools held their annual Mayday celebration at the place on one or two occasions toward the close of the eighteen-seventies.

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Only one other more than ordinarily tall and large persimmon tree has ever been known to have grown in the settlement along the Illinois River, east of the Park Hill postoffice. This other tree once stood where Barken Fork emptied into the Illinois River before its channel became changed following a high water stage, many years ago. This persimmon tree was apparently equally as tall and large as the tree in the bottom land of the Illinois River.

On uplands and in valleys, persimmon trees are numerous in sections of Cherokee County, but none of them are of extraordinary size nor more than ordinarily tall.