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COFFEE BEAN TREE

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Indian-Pioneer History
September 1, 1937

COFFEE BEAN TREE.

A large and wide-spreading coffee bean tree long stood near the site of "Rose Cottage," the home of John Ross, Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, in the Park Hill neighborhood. That the tree was of great age was evidenced by its size and height. In course of time the ownership of the "old Chief Ross place" passed from descendants and a new comer acquired possession. As the wood of the coffee bean tree is durable the new owner had the big tree chopped down, and its large trunk split into posts for fencing with barbed wire.

In connection with the coffee bean tree old time residents of the locality were accustomed to relate that Chief John Ross and his guest, John Howard Payne, author of "Home, Sweet Home," sometimes sat beneath its dense shade on the occasion of Payne's visit in 1840. Payne reached Park Hill, it seems, at the beginning of October, if not during September, in which case, the weather being fine, there is no doubt that host and guest spent portions of the day in the open air. The tree was of considerable size

in 1840, according to those who were familiar in long past years with the condition and dimensions of the trees which stood near the home.

The coffee bean tree escaped injury on the occasion of the burning of the home of the Principal Chief in 1863, and continued to slowly increase in girth and height during later years. When a new house was built near the old site the big tree was not molested. From all indications it would stand indefinitely and attain vast size, but change of ownership had adverse results and the tree disappeared.

Several of the people of the locality who had lived thereabouts from the early days of the Cherokee Nation west of the Mississippi, related interesting anecdotes concerning notable persons. Moving in, or visiting the Park Hill neighborhood pointing out spots visited by such persons, trees, beneath which they stood or sat, or springs from which they drank. The story relating to the Principal Chief and Payne is one from a number of anecdotes concerning bygone periods and people.

Authorities: Related by Mrs. H. J. Hinton as to the two sitting under the tree. Visit of Payne was well-known to old time residents. Mrs. Hinton lives at Park Hill.