

ROSS, ELIZABETH

MAJOR GEORGE LOWREY

7490

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Elizabeth Ross,
Interviewer,
September, 10, 1937.

An Order of Council.

The oldest monument in the Tahlequah cemetery stands at the grave of Major George Lowrey. During his lifetime Lowrey held many official positions in the old Cherokee Nation beyond the Mississippi River, as well as in the nation in Indian Territory. At intervals he served as Assistant Principal Chief for some years. He was a captain in the Cherokee regiment at the battle of Tohopeka, or Horseshoe Bend of the Tallapoosa River in Alabama, in March, 1814, and was promoted for his services in that contest with the hostile Creek warriors.

Strange to say, no mention whatever of Lowrey's military career is made in the inscriptions on the monument.

The National Council was in session at Tahlequah, October 20, 1852, when informed of the death of George Lowrey, who lived some four miles south of the Park Hill mission station.

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Born in 1770, Lowrey was eighty-two years of age when he died. A joint resolution was immediately enacted by the two legislative bodies, requesting that the body of the aged and notable leader be buried at Tahlequah, in the Council-burying ground. The family granted the request and a public funeral was held. The Reverend Samuel A. Worcester of Park Hill delivered the funeral sermon. Burial was then made in what was for many years the old Tahlequah cemetery, but in 1890 removal was made to a new location and the remains of George Lowrey were re-interred in the present cemetery, and the old monument placed at the grave.

The monument of marble, procured in the Cherokee hills, was provided by the National Council, in compliance with the resolution passed on the 21st day of October, 1853. This resolution was introduced by the Reverend Walter A. Duncan, a young man who was then a member of the Council from Flint district. The resolution was approved by John Ross, Principal Chief, and a skilled stone mason was employed to construct the monument.

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John Watt, a native of Scotland, who had assisted in building the national seminaries, was selected to procure the necessary marble and to complete and erect the monument. Watt then visited the marble deposits and after procuring the rough marble slabs hauled them a considerable distance and entered upon his task. Approximately one year elapsed before the monument was completed and erected.

A peculiar error occurs in one of the inscriptions to the effect that "He was a member of the Church of Christ," when in reality he was a member of the Presbyterian Church, for thirty years an elder in the Presbyterian Church at Willstown, Alabama, and for a number of years a deacon in the Park Hill Church.

A biographical sketch of Sequoyah or George Guess was written in the Cherokee letters by Lowrey, in the old nation east, and presented to John Howard Payne, when the author of "Home, Sweet Home" was in the old nation in 1835.

George Lowrey is quite possibly the only person buried in Oklahoma who once met and talked with George

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Washington, the first president of the United States, in 1791 or thereabouts. Lowrey was then a delegate to the national capital, then New York City. Mention of the fact is made upon the monument.

Authority:

Information given by Reverend W. A.

Duncan; Resolutions of the national council, October 20, 1852, and October 21, 1853; References to George Lowrey by William P. Ross, former Principal Chief.