

ROSS, ELIZABETH

LUTHERAN MISSION.

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September 20, 1937.

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The Lutheran Church began missionary work among the Cherokees in 1892. In that year the Reverend N. L. Nielson, a native of Denmark, arrived in the Tahlequah District. That was in the month of June and soon afterward the Lutheran minister went out in quest of a site for his station and began work among fullblood Cherokees at Moody, a place incorrectly spelled and referred to as Moodys. Quite soon after arriving among the Cherokees the Lutheran missionary began studying the Cherokee alphabet, became familiar with the eighty-five characters, as he has related, in three weeks, and became able to read the language but could not understand a word of it, so employed an interpreter, and, through that medium, preached to the native people of the region. The Indians were desirous of having a school established and were told by the missionary that he would start school work as soon as the hottest weather was over, if they would assist him in getting ready a house and seats. A vacant house, (reputed to be haunted) was found and the mission school started on the first Monday in September, 1892, with eight pupils.

Headquarters for the following ten years were at

Moody. The Reverend N. L. Nielson preached, taught in the day school, and in Sunday school. He was married in 1893, his wife being a native of Denmark.

The school at Moody became overcrowded. The United States government requested that white children be permitted to attend, and as a result the white children crowded the Indians out and larger buildings became necessary. The Moravian Board had near the middle of the last decade of the last century abandoned the missionary field among the Indians and there was in vicinity of Oaks, the buildings long occupied by the missionaries who had been stationed at New Spring Place, the Moravian Mission. These buildings were acquired by the Lutherans, and removal of their work was made to the old Moravian station early in August, 1903, since which time the work of the Lutheran mission has been successfully carried on. In the mission school re-established there, one hundred young people and children have attended the school every year, according to the history of the Lutheran Mission.

A new church building was completed in 1913.

Several years later a two-story school building with four rooms of ample size was erected, and during 1921-22 the new boarding school was completed.

The Reverend N. L. Nielson and his wife resigned, the latter's health and strength having given way, and a younger man and his wife assumed charge.

The official name of the mission at New Spring Place is "The Cherokee Indian Mission of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church".

At the present time (1937) the Reverend C. A. Vammen is in charge of the Lutheran Mission.

Not far distant from the mission buildings of today is the old burial place in which may be seen the tombstones of several of the Moravian missionaries of the bygone time. These stones are placed flat upon the graves, as is the custom of the Moravians to so place them.

A spring of strong volume flows near the site of the old mission, a circumstance which caused the Moravian Missionaries in 1842 to designate their station as New Spring Place. The first of their missions in the old Cherokee Nation in Georgia was called Spring Place Mission. Authorities: The Reverend N. L. Nielson; the Reverend C. A. Vammen; Moravian Church History; Act of the Cherokee National Council in 1842.