

ROSS, ELIZABETH

THE TOWN OF PEGGS.

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TOWN OF PEGGS

Peggs, a small town in the northern Cherokee County, derives its name from that of a prominent Cherokee citizen and official of long ago. If correctly spelled the name would be Fegg, but when a postoffice was established something more than four decades ago, an "S" was added and ever since the name has been Peggs.

Thomas Fegg was one of the early Cherokee who filled official positions before the outbreak of the Civil War. He was once a member of the National Committee, later designated as the Senate, and also once a judge of the courts. He was a professor of the Christian religion, and an upholder of law and order.

The home of Thomas Fegg was established at the border of a small prairie, lying between extensive woodlands, some eighteen miles north of Tahlequah. In the vicinity lived other citizens of the Cherokee Nation, but the section was sparsely populated for many years. The grassy open tract was called Feggs Prairie, a name yet recalled by a few of the older Cherokee people. The prairie lay about halfway between Park Hill and Grand Saline, and during a considerable period travelers journeying over the road to and from the present town

of Salina, stopped for meals at a house that was referred to as the Halfway House. Mrs. Pegg operated this wayside eating place for sometime, as some have recalled.

When the Civil War began and a general convention of Cherokees decided upon an alliance with the Confederacy, Thomas Pegg was assigned the rank of major in the first Cherokee Confederate Regiment, an organization usually referred to as "Drew's Regiment", from the fact that its colonel was John Drew, a prominent Cherokee who died at the residence of Daniel Hughes Ross in the town of Fort Gibson, soon after the close of the Civil War.

When the Confederate advance was made into Arkansas in March, 1862, the Indian soldiers were ordered out of their own country. This was against the agreement made with Confederate Commissioner Albert Pike in 1861, and upon the Confederate defeat at Elk Horn Tavern, or Pea Ridge, in March of 1862, the greater number of the members of "Drew's Regiment" returned to their allegiance with the Government of the United States. In 1862 was organized the Union Indian Brigade. In this organization Thomas Pegg received the rank of captain in company E,

Third Regiment, and served until the close of the war.

During the progress of the conflict Capt. Thomas Regg was elected to the Union contingent of the Cherokee's assistant principal chief. As the principal chief was absent from the Cherokee Nation, Regg signed the Cherokee Emancipation Proclamation February, 1862, which emancipated all negroes, held as slaves in Cherokee's.

At the conclusion of the war Regg was sent to Washington as one of the delegates from the Cherokee Nation. Many questions required settlement and it was not until the spring of 1865 that he found opportunity to return home, but that opportunity was not realized. Stricken with severe illness, the notable Cherokee failed to rally, and in April he died at the National Capitol. His grave is in the Congressional Cemetery. Appropriate resolutions were enacted by the National Council in session at Tallahassee.

A tornado, which resulted in some sixty deaths, the injury of many, and much destruction of property, struck Regg on the night of May 3, 1880.

#### APPENDIX:

Resolutions of Cherokee National Council, October 17, 1866. Recollections of old Cherokee citizens.