

ROSS, ELIZABETH INDIAN G. A. R. POST.

#7093

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Elizabeth Ross,  
Interviewer,  
August 9, 1937.

"Indian G. A. R. Post"

Forty years ago (1896) there was in existence at Tahlequah, Cherokee Nation, the only Indian Grand Army of the Republic Post in the Indian Territory. This post had been organized several years previously. There were then living quite a number of Civil War Veterans who had served in the Union Army. The majority of those composing the membership of the post at Tahlequah were Cherokees, once members of the Union Indian Brigade; but there were also some white veterans who lived in and about Tahlequah and who became members of the post.

Officially the post bore this designation: "Captain White Catcher Post No. 2, Department of the Indian Territory, G. A. R." In 1896, the post commander was Savelon S. Bayles, veteran of a Kansas regiment, and the adjutant was Robert Bruce Ross, who had belonged to a company in the Union Indian Brigade in the Civil War.

The meeting place of the G. A. R. Post was at first in the Odd Fellows' Hall, which was in the old building originally built as a Masonic Hall in 1853. At a later

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date the members of the post met in a larger hall in the upper story of a brick building on the principal street. Meetings were well attended during several years, but gradually the membership became reduced as one after another of the veterans passed from life, and in course of time meetings were held no more.

The man for whom the post was named was a noted native Cherokee of a bygone time. White Catcher had served as a member of the Cherokee National Council, his home having been in the Tahlequah District. He enlisted in the Union Indian Brigade in 1862 and received appointment as captain of a company. He performed meritorious service and when the war came to a close was elected as a member of the National Committee, or Senate from Tahlequah District. Letters of interest and importance affecting the Cherokees demanded attention at the national capital and in 1866 Captain White Catcher was selected as one of a delegation of six members to go to Washington. While on that mission Captain White Catcher served as a pallbearer at the funeral of Principal Chief John Ross, who died August 1, in that year. Some days later, the work of the delegation being completed,

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the former officer started on his return home, but his death occurred on the way and he lies buried in the State of Missouri.

In the resolutions adopted by the National Council on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October, 1866, it is said that "White Catcher died at Pleasant Hill, Missouri, on his return home, on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1866. He was captain of Company "I," Third Regiment of Indian Home Guards, Colonel William A. Philips in command, from the time of its organization, in 1862, until honorably mustered out of the United States' service."

Authorities: Resolutions, Cherokee Countil, Thomas Hendricks, deceased.