

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JOHN ROSS, 1790-1866

(Biographical sketch based on John Ross and the Cherokee Indians, by Rachel Caroline Eaton, Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1914; Chief John Ross--His Life With Historic Notes on the State of Georgia, Walker County, Rossville, Rossville, Georgia: North Georgia Publishing Company, 1937; and notes from Mrs. Penelope J. Allen.)

- 1790 Born October 3 at Tahnoovayah (Turkey Town), on the Coosa River in Cherokee County, Alabama. He was the third child, first son, of Daniel Ross, a Scotch trader among the Cherokees, and Mollie (McDonald) Ross, daughter of John McDonald, also a Scotch trader, and his half-blood Cherokee wife, Ann (Shorey) McDonald.
- 1797 Attended with parents the Green Corn Festival at Hills-town, an annual thanksgiving feast held in the spring when Indian corn was in the roasting ear. The festival lasted for several days and was attended by all the tribes.
- 1797-1805 Daniel Ross's request to establish a school was granted by the Council, and John Barber Davis was employed as teacher. It was in this school and under the instruction of Mr. Davis that John Ross learned to speak and write English considered better than that of most statesmen of the day.
- 1805-1808 John and Lewis Ross attended an academy at Kingston, Tennessee, where they lived in the family of Thomas M. Clark, a merchant friend of their father. They helped him in the store and obtained much practical business training which was useful later in their lives. They were called home by the death of their mother.
- 1809 Return J. Meigs, United States Indian Agent, sent John Ross, then 19, on a mission to the Western Cherokees accompanied by John Spier, a half breed; Kalsatchee, an aged Cherokee; and Peter, a Mexican.
- 1812 John Ross married Mrs. Elizabeth (Brown) Henley (1791-1839), a widow with two children. Her Cherokee name was "Quatie" or "Quata." Ross and his wife had six children.
- 1813 Serving as Major and Adjutant of Gideon Morgan's Cherokee Regiment, Ross took part in the Creek War, siding with the Americans against the Creeks. He swam the river and helped capture the boats of the Creeks at the Battle of

- Horseshoe Bend. Without the help of the Cherokees Jackson's victory would not have been so great.
- 1815 In partnership with Timothy Meigs established a trading store known as Meigs & Ross. After Meigs' death Lewis Ross became his partner, and the firm name was changed to John and Lewis Ross. The store was first at Rossville, Georgia, and was later moved to Rhea and then Meigs Counties.
- 1816 Ross was one of the Cherokees sent to Washington to protest the provisions of the Treaty of Fort Jackson. The committee was successful in convincing Crawford, Secretary of War, of the justice of their claim. As a result the Treaty of Washington was negotiated, in which the boundary lines were satisfactorily established.
- 1817 John Ross was elected member of the Cherokee National Council, and attended the treaty session at Calhoun, Georgia, where the U. S. Government insisted on cession of all land belonging to the Cherokees north of the Hiwassee River. He protested strongly in the form of a memorial. Later in the year he became chairman of the Cherokee National Committee.
- 1827 As President of the Constitutional Convention, John Ross drew up a constitution for the Cherokees. He served with William Hicks as Assistant Chief of the Cherokees.
- 1828 Elected Principal Chief of the Cherokees; moved from Rossville to the Coosa River opposite Rome, Georgia, where he built a handsome home.
- 1830 Georgia extended her jurisdiction to her chartered lands, which included the Cherokee lands, and distributed them by lottery to Georgia citizens. John Ross protested to Washington, and while he was away, his home was taken over by a Georgia citizen who had drawn it in a lottery. He moved his family to Red Clay, Tennessee.
- 1830-1835 A party grew up among the Cherokees headed by Major Ridge, favoring cession of the Cherokee lands while something could be had for them. This group became known as the "Treaty Party".
- 1835 The "Treaty Party," composed of 20 unauthorized Indians, signed a treaty by which all the Cherokees were to remove to the West within two years. Ross protested to Washington, and the Cherokee Nation repudiated the treaty. A protest petition signed by 17,000 Cherokees was taken by Ross to Washington.
- 1839 John Ross's wife died during removal and is buried in Arkansas.

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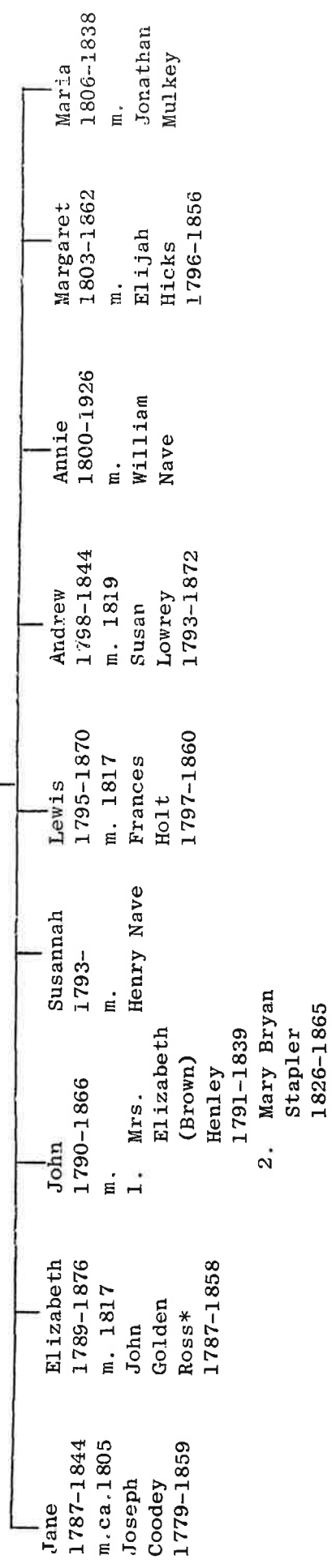
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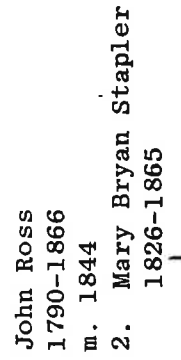
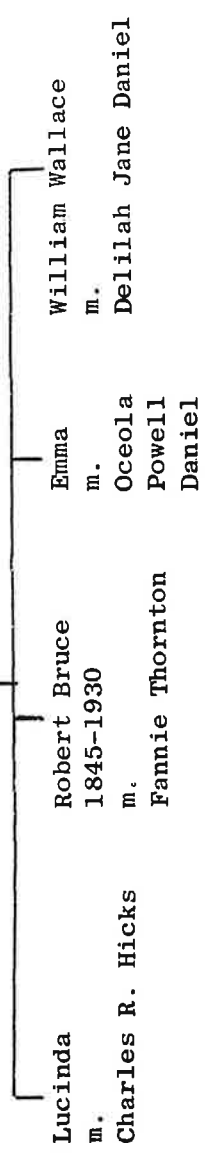
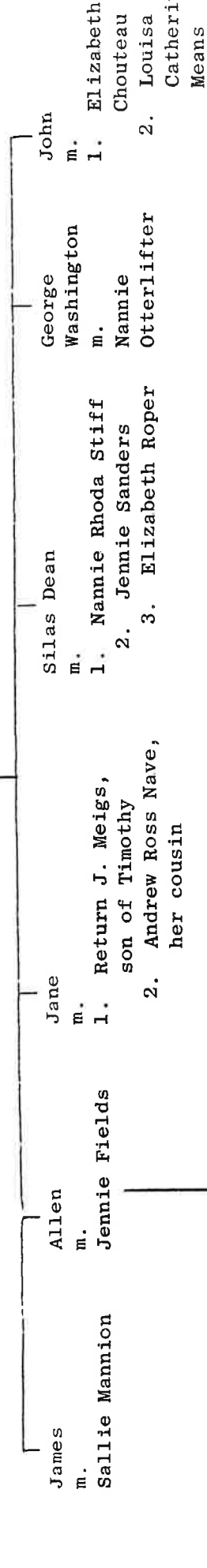
- 1839 Due to the fact that there were by far more recent emigrants, they were able to elect John Ross principal chief of the Cherokees in the West.
- 1844 John Ross married Miss Mary Brain Stapler, a young woman from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, whom he had met while on a trip to the East. She was a Quaker, then aged 18. They had two children.
- 1861-1865 Slavery was practised extensively by the Cherokees. John Ross owned seventy slaves at the outbreak of the Civil War. The Confederacy immediately tried to enlist the aid of all the Indian tribes. Ross tried very hard to keep them neutral, and it was not until they were abandoned by the United States that he was forced to sign an agreement with the Confederacy. The Cherokees furnished several Southern regiments.
- 1866 After the War the United States claimed that the Cherokee Nation had forfeited the treaty made at the time of removal by aiding the South. They cancelled all payment of funds and proceeded to make a new treaty which was much less favorable than the old one. They were forced to share their lands with the freedmen and with the tribes in Kansas who were being removed. It was on a trip to Washington regarding the collection of Cherokee claims against the United States that John Ross became ill and died August 1 in Philadelphia. He is buried in the family plot at Park Hill, near Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Daniel Ross
 1760-1830
 m. 1786
 Molly McDonald
 1770-1808



* from New Jersey, not a relative

**1. Mrs Elizabeth (Anna) Mosley
1791-1830**



1. Caroline C. Lazalear
2. Mrs. Christine (Haglund) Foreman