

She tells that the mission obtained its water from a big spring near the complex of buildings. While her husband was still living, she says he cleaned the spring out one time and found that it was eleven feet deep. In the establishment of the mission, the possibility of being attacked by resentful forces was not ruled out. Should that possibility have occurred, a large tunnel made of flat stones was built from the spring and extended under some of the buildings. A neighbor who once lived near the Nelsons, Nell Harlan, told her that she had an aunt who was a slave cook at the mission when she was 18 years old.

At one time most of the land in this area belonged to the Vann family of Cherokees, and the area was known in early days as Vann Bottoms, which later became known as Lick Bend (named after the salt lick, or salt springs). Mrs. Nelson's home place was the original Sarah Rowland Indian allotment.

Referring to the Old Union Mission, Nell Harlan had told her that pioneer initiative was used in most of their everyday life there. A good example was that of making butter for the Mission. A small wooden barrel was filled with cream and attached to a treadmill device. A big Newfoundland dog was tied to the contraption and as he walked the treadmill, it turned the container, eventually producing butter.

Probably the first school to be built in that area after the closing of Union Mission was the Lick Bend School. This was the first school that Mrs. Nelson attended and went there eight years. The school remained for many years; and was finally consumed with the coming of Ft. Gibson Lake.

Within the area of where Union Mission stood there remains a little cemetery used by the mission, and there is evidence of some twenty graves within the preserved area. Only two markers are preserved: one is that of the Rev. Epaphrus Chapman, and the other for a McKinzy child. Not too far away from the Mission site is another cemetery, barely recognizable. From all indication it was the burial place of some of the Chouteau family connected with the establishment of the Saline (Chouteau's Trading Post at Salina, and other locations on Grand River). Mrs. Nelson tells that some thirty years ago or more, there were about twenty graves there. At least eight of the graves had marble spire-type monuments and two were large sandstone monuments. At sometime in those thirty years all of the marble monuments have been removed and some of the graves have been dug into. The sight there that meets the eye to-day is not pretty. One of the large sandstone markers rests down in a hole about four feet deep and the other stone lays on the ground, badly broken. Both of these markers are for members of the James Augustus Chouteau family indicating burials in 1845 and 1850.