

In the Bayou Menard country east of Ft. Gibson there lived many people in the early days of the beginning of the Cherokee Nation. Mrs. Harris recalls some of those early families were the Johnsons, Starnes, Dyes, Cooks, Rileys, Sanders, and Gott.

The little village of Perkins has existed a long time, dating from the early days of the Cherokee Nation. It has had its little stores, a blacksmith shop, and a school house. During the days when stage coaches operated between Tahlequah and Muskogee, it was one of the stopping places. Located six miles east of Ft. Gibson, the Perkins community was once a thriving farming community, but now has given way to cattle and pastureland, and gentleman farming. It never became a trading center since Ft. Gibson was only a short distance to the west, and this old established town served their needs.

Mrs. Harris and her husband remember hearing the lonesome sound of the steamboat whistles on the River on a clear still day. They were small children then and were never privileged to go see the boats.

In those early days much of the river bottom was in cane breaks and presented a barrier to getting to the river, except for the road going to the ferry. There were three different ferries at one time in the Ft. Gibson area. There was one ferry across the Arkansas River just northeast of Muskogee, one ferry above Ft. Gibson for the crossing of Grand River, and another ferry above the mouth of the Verdigris River. Some have also mentioned another ferry known as the Taylor ferry northwest of Muskogee.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Harris were born and raised in the Tahlequah-Gideon country, but they were away from Cherokee County a number of years when they lived in Okmulgee. They talk of Mt. Zion, Crittenden, Eureka, Gideon and other places where their peoples lived long ago. It is at these places where most of their folks have been buried.