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Interview with C. B. Harris, age 63,
lives on Route 3, Muskogee, Okla. Just
North of the present Bacone College.

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Mr. Harris was born and reared on the place which he now lives. He is a fullblood Cherokee Indian.

Father's name was Red Bird Harris born near Atlanta, Ga. date unknown. Died in 1903. Buried at family cemetery at his home? Mother's name was Ellen Rogers Harris, born in Georgia, date unknown. Was a distant relative of the late Will Rogers, the humorist. Died in 1910. Buried near the town of Coweta, Okla.

Grandfather-Father's side. Bill Harris born and died in Georgia. Dates unknown. Fullblood Cherokee.

Grandmother--Father's side. Savannah Collins Harris and died in Georgia. Date unknown. Fullblood Cherokee.

Grandfather-Mother's side. Dr. Robert Rogers born and died in Georgia, Dates unknown. Was fullblood Cherokee.

Grandmother-Mother's side. First name unknown, last name Pateish. Born and died in Georgia. Dates unknown. Fullblood Cherokee.

MIGRATION TO OKLAHO A

Number of the Cherokee tribe as early as 1828 left Georgia and came west as far as Arkansas. About 1838 my great-uncle, Henry Harris, was instrumental in perfecting an agreement with the officials in Washington for the moving of the Cherokees in Georgia to the Indian Territory. The move westward started about the same year and continued on through 1839 and probably as late as 1840. Some came on foot and their conveyances were ox-carts, owne, wagon trains, caravans, etc. The government moved those who agreed with the treaty and those who did not want to leave their rich fertile soil was driven out by the soldiers and came along as history has already mentioned the "Trails of Tears". My mother Ellen Rogers was one of the ones on this trail. My father Red Bird came from

Georiga to New Orleans, La., and thence from there by boat up the Mississippi and Arkansas rivers and unloaded at the present town of Webbers Falls, Okla. The Western Cherokees who settled first in Arkansas joined the Eastern Cherokees in Indian Territory about the time my father came which was in 1839. He and mother were married and settled on the place I now live long before the Civil War. They fought, lived and died on this place.

Missionaries accompanied them on their journey westward consisting of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, etc. Bacone College just South of where I live was first a Baptist Mission. The English language was taught in the schools. My mother and father as well as grandfathers and Mothers were educated back east.

LIFE AND CUSTOMS

Prior to the Civil War the time finally came when peace and prosperity came to the Cherokees. Education had been well founded. They had adapted themselves to the land and raised corn, did considerable hunting, fishing, raised their own pork, dried their beef and vension, ground their own corn. Raised some sheep and did their own carding of the wool and operated the old spinning wheels. Fruit raising was not much, for wild plums, blackberries, dewberries, huckleberries and other was abundant. Travel between the states and Indian Territory was by small steamboats and wagon trains. The boats ran between Ft. Smith & Ft. Gibson, Okla.

SCHOOLS AND MISSIONS

My mother, Ellen Rogers Harris, being educated taught school and grandmother, Savannah Collins Harris, also taught. Their education did much to help the Cherokee children in their localities and I know it was

surely a great benefit to me and the rest of their children.

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CIVIL WAR

The Cherokees did not particularly care about the war and were slow to take part for they realized what war meant.

My folks were all confederates. The Confederate army was composed of the white men from the states, particularly Texas. The Cherokees were recruited into the army by their Chiefs. It was on my fathers place and where I now live that Ft. Davis was erected and used for some two or three years, when it was burned by the Union soldiers.

My father fought in the war under Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, Albert Pike and Stand Watie. Important battles in which he was engaged was on Elk Creek near the present town of Oktaha, Oklahoma under Gen. Cooper in 1863. The Union troops were under Gen. Blunt. Confederates were whipped and refugeed to Ft. Washita which was located near the present town of Ardmore, Okla. The women folks were moved from Ft. Davis to Ft. Washita so that they could be fed, sheltered and protected and my mother and grandmother was among those who went.

My father was also engaged in battle at Prairie Grove, Ark., under Gen. Stand Watie. Cannot say whether whipped there or not. They were sent to reenforce the Confederates and cannot say who had charge of the main Confederate Troops or the Union Troops. The Seminoles and Creeks refused to go to Arkansas to fight in this battle.

Father was with Gen. Stand Watie when they captured the supply wagon train of about 350 wagons headed for Ft. Gibson down the old Military Trail out of Seneca, Mo. They were captured in the Flat Rock Country in Mayes county, Oklahoma, at the town about where Pensacola, Okla. is now located. I have been over this place with my father since the

the war. This occurred in 1864.

Gen. Cooper surrendered those from the states in the later part of 1864 but the Cherokees and Creeks were not surrendered until 1865.

RAILROADS

The M.K.&T. Railroad was built just west of my place across the Arkansas river in 1872 and I believe the Frisco then the Atlantic & Pacific was built into Vinita, Okla. out of Springfield, Mo., and connected with the M.K.&T. R.R. about the same year.

TRIBES AFTER THE WAR

The country was in a devastated condition and all tribes were more or less grieved. However, what is now known as the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES were educated and soon settled down but the tribes of Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache were more or less wild and worried about the white people invading the country, taking from them their hunting and fishing grounds and caused considerable trouble among the whites, settlers, etc. These tribes were over the western part of Oklahoma more or less. Later they were confined to reservations.

VILLAGES

In 1872 there was a village set up on the east bank of the Arkansas River near the present M.K.T. R.R. bridge and near the old Ft. Arubkle Road by the people building the railroad and this was called Tent City. The same year 1872 the village, now Muskogee, Okla., was started. There was, year forgotten, when a village was started east of the present town of Okay, Okla. The storekeepers name was Gulagher. Think he was the father of W. M. (Clu) Gulagher. The village was replaced and moved up to the K.O. & G. railroad in 1907.

BRIDGES

Toll bridge across the north fork of Elk Creek near the present

town of Oktaha and was run by a fellow by the name of Jim McIntosh. Cannot say when built or abandoned but I was over this bridge in 1880 and likewise the one over the South fork of Elk Creek a toll bridge run by a Mrs. Drew. I do not know her first name. These toll bridges were on the old Texas Road to Ft. Washita.

TRADING CENTERS

My only recollection of trading centers were at the Creek Agency on the east side of Fern Mountain near Muskogee, Oklahoma at the present time and the one that was at the place where the Spavinaw Lake is now located. Of course, there were villages and towns later on.

CAMPS

The only camp I can remember was the government camp of the driver of the wagon trains over the old Ft. Arbuckle road. This camp was located about 2 miles north of Muskogee, Oklahoma on Mill st.

FORDS

My memory recalls only one ford which was across the Arkansas river which was about a half mile south of the present Muskogee Electric Traction Co. Bridge. Name Rabbit Ford.

FERRIES

Shannon Ferry across the Verdigris River down the river a short ways from the present M.K.T. railroad bridge. Harris Ferry operated by Red Bird, my father, near the present M.K.T. railroad bridge. These two ferries operated before the railroad came through and was instrumental in the handling of teams, wagons, and equipment for the railroad during their construction. The ferries were abandoned about 1873.

Government Ferry was across Grand River about where the highway bridge at present crosses the river between Ft. Gibson and Okay. This

was the ferry uses in transportating supplies and passengers leaving the ¹⁹⁶ railroad at Gibson, Okla. in 1872 on until other facilities were available. The ferry finally fell into private hands and passed out I can't say date.

Brewer Ferry was at the mouth of Grand River just above the present Muskogee, Okla. Water Pump Station and was operate by a man named Brewer and a Jim Sullivan.

Nevins Ferry was located just below the Brewer Ferry near Muskogee Pump Station on the Ark. River and was owned by Mose Nevins and his wife Julia Nevins. Mose was a Choctaw and Julia a Creek Indian. This was the recognize ferry for years and was used by all mail carriers and wagon trains handling supplies, passengers, etc., between Tahle uah, Ft. Gibson, Muskogee, Creek Agency, Okmulgee and Ft. Arbuckle and all other points north, south, east and west. This ferry was operating as early as 1872. Ferry was abandoned about 1907.

Frozen Rock Ferry crossed the Ark. River about due east of the present Frozen Rock Cemetery and was owned by the Roger Bros. Don't know when started operating or abandoned.

Smith Ferry crossed the Ark. River several miles below the Frozen Rock Ferry and was used as the main artery between Muskogee and Webbers Falls. Cannot same when operation starte but same is still in use at times. There was a ferry up the old military road north of Ft. Gibson but can't recall the name of same at this time. I might add that I worked at intervals on the old Nevins Ferry and have a picture of same in my possession now.

TRAILS & ROADS

Ft. Arbuckle Road ran due west from Nevins Ferry present Muskogee Pump Station to Creek Agency east side of Fern Mountain thence southerly

direct to Okmulgee, Okla. and thence in southwestern direction to Ft. ¹⁹⁷
Arbuckle or near the present city of Davis, Okla.

Texas Road started at the mouth of Grand River by Nevins Ferry
afore mentioned and followed the line of the Cherokee and Creek Nation
over toll bridges across Elk Creeks as mentioned above, across a ferry
on north fork of the North Canadian ferry I cannot call by name or who
operated and on to North Fork Town which was about six miles east of the
present town of Eufaula, Okla. where to from this point I do not know
far it was as far as I ever traveled this road.

There was a military road that ran from Ft. Gibson by the old
Ft. Gibson Fort across Grand river and on to the point of connection with
M.K.T. railroad at Gibson, Okla. I do not know any name other than
government road.

There was also a military road which ran northerly out of Ft.
Gibson and crossed the Grand River about half way between there and
Seneca, Mo. I know of know name other than government road and cannot
recall the ferry that crossed the grand as I have stated under the head-
ing of ferries.

The road between Nevins Ferry to Tahlequah I presume was part of
the old Ft. Arbuckle road that being its east extremity.

FORTS

Fort Davis afore mentioned was a Confederate fort and was located
on the north bank of the Ark. River about one-half mile north of the pre-
sent Lacone College and is now located as being in sections 7 & 8 Twp.
15 E, Range 19 E.

The fort proper consist of about 10 acres and comprised of a
mule, horse and ox corral, officers quarters, hospital, and improvised
quarters for the soldiers as well as wells for them and one of the wells,
~~a dug well is still in use and water is being used from same for my~~
family today.

The fort was constructed under Gen. Stand Watie, Pike & Cooper.

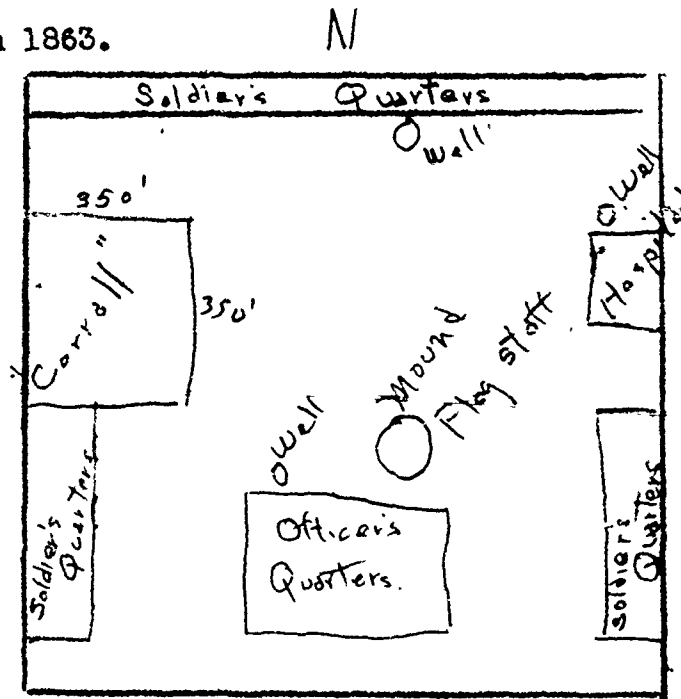
On the above described ground is several mounds and it was on one of these that was planted the flag staff that floated the confederate flag.

Cholera broke out among the soldiers and many died at the Fort and they were buried all over these two sections of land together with them that were killed in battle and it is no uncommon thing for those farming today to plow up their remains.

My father owned the land on which this fort was built, it was here that he fought, lived and died and is buried on these grounds at our family cemetery along with a dear old friend of his who lived with him after the war by the name of Thurman. A tombstone is erected at his grave and bears only the name of old man Thurman.

I do not remember the regiment and company that my father fought with but this can be determined by checking the company and regiment that fought the battle at Oktaka.

Below is a brief sketch of old Ft. Davis that was burned by the Union Soldiers in 1863.



Mr. C. B. Harris states that his life as a boy was like that of other typical American Western boys. That he liked to hunt, fish, dance, play ball, horse race, rope cattle, ride the range, go to school, go to church and that his hardest task was at round up time when they had to separate the different brands on the cattle as each owner of cattle had their particular brand and of branding the calves and the owner of the calves was determined by the mark on the cow that it was following.

L. W. Wilson, Field Worker