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(Interview with - Mrs. Virginia Wyatt Harris
By Grace W. Smith, Field Worker).
March 15, 1937 at Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

The Louis Le Flore home is a historical place today in Mississippi. The furnishings of this home were copied from Josephine, wife of Napoleon, and the name of the home, Mal Maison, it was named for Josephine's palace in France. Louis Le Flore was a fullblood Frenchman. He married three times. Two of his wives were Choctaws, both Cravat by name. They were first cousins of Push-Ma-Ta-Ha. John Harkins married one of Louis Le Flore's daughters, and their children were George and Willis Harkins. Willis Harkins married Minerva Folsom and they had two children, Willis and Minerva. George Harkin's widow, Aunt Mary Harkins, is living with her daughter at Emet, Oklahoma, and she is 89 years old. Minerva Harkins is the present Mrs. Virginia Wyatt Harris, the second wife of R. M. Harris, Governor of Chickasaw Nation. Virginia Wyatt Harris was born in Choctaw Nation near Ft. Towson in 1869. Her parents were Minerva and Montgomery Wyatt, her father was white and mother Indian and they belong to the Choctaw tribe. Her ancestors came from Mississippi.

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On Governor R. M. Harris's side, Louis LeFlore's third wife was a Chickasaw Indian, (whose name the family did not know). Their daughter, Elsie, married Daniel Harris. Their son, Joseph Harris, married Catherine Nail. They were the parents of Governor R. M. Harris. Governor Harris was the Governor of the Chickasaw Indians; he died November 11, 1927, and is buried in the city cemetery here, (Tishomingo). R. M. Harris Jr., the son of Governor Harris is living in Tishomingo, Oklahoma now and is the only boy.

CAPITOL

The first Capitol of Chickasaw tribe was the old smoke house out on Governor Harris' place. It has been removed to the court house lawn and now stands on the west side of the present courthouse. The present courthouse, or the old Chickasaw Capitol, was built while Governor R. M. Harris was the Governor.

THE BATTLE SITE

A Battle Site of the Civil War was at Ft. Washita which was a military post. In this part of the country Ft. Washita is called a ghost town. (The scene of many ghost stories).

CHIEF TISHOMINGO

Tishomingo was named after the chief of Chickasaw tribe. He camped near the springs in Tishomingo. This was before the Indians had a Governor and there was no town. Governor J. H. Johnston's wife is a descendant of Chief Tishomingo.

MAP

Mrs. R. M. Harris Jr. has a map of the old Indian Territory in good condition. They want to keep the original copy but you can have a duplicate of the map made if you wish.

BILL OF SALE

Mrs. R. M. Harris Jr. has a bill of sale for cattle in the original handwriting of J. D. Harris, the father of Governor Harris. The bill was made in 1886 and is in good condition.

ROBBERS

In years past the robbers used to come into Indian Territory and molest the people, they would take coals of fire and burn their faces and punish the people in other ways, trying to get the people to tell of buried treasure and gold.

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The James brothers were among these robbers and called desperadoes. They camped near Blue river at some springs and the springs are called Desperado Springs today.

CHURCH

Reverend J. J. Reed, a missionary, was stationed at Wapanucka, Oklahoma.

The Harris family Bible is in the historical building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

INDIAN COOKING

Cold (or coal) flour--a drink. Corn is parched, then beaten into a meal. This is mixed with sugar and water, making a delicious drink.

PASHOFA. Corn is beaten in a mortar with pestle. Corn is then boiled with fresh pork until tender.

This little story is told of the uncivilized Indians. When the pashofa was boiling and a dog would come up to smell, the Indian would hit the dog in the head with the stirring-paddle and cook dog and all.

WALUXSHA. Or wild grape dumplings. This dish is made of wild post oak grapes, boiled and strained. The juice is sweetened to taste. When the dumplings are made, quite tough and dropped into the juice.

Cook until done. (This was Governor Harris' favorite dish).

(Mrs. Harris was not positive about the spelling of these Indian dishes).

COMMENTS

I visited with Mrs. R. M. Harris Sr. and Mrs. ~~R. M.~~ Harris Jr. They were very gracious in helping me but they could not furnish me with legends. They referred me to Aunt Mary Harkins about this and I hope to visit her later. They did tell me that it was the custom of the fullblood Indians not to talk. So a lot of facts pertaining to the customs of the people will not come to light. The present Mrs. R. M. Harris Jr. is keeping this Biography for her children.

Mrs. Harris told me as far back as there was a record there had only been one son in each generation. In the family of R. M. Harris, Jr., he also has the one son.

The old Harris burial ground is just east of Tishomingo at the old Harris home but Governor Harris is buried in the city cemetery.