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BUTLER, ED

INTERVIEW

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6861

Etta D. Mason,
Interviewer

July 17, 1937

Interview with Ed Butler
Tushka, Oklahoma

I was born in slavery. My father was Lemmon Garland and my mother was Linda Fulsom. My father and mother were bought by Charles Stewart about 1843, and I was born in 1846. We belonged to the Stewarts until about 1853. Charles Stewart died and his wife sold her slaves to Samson Fulsom.

The plantation on which we lived till I was ten or eleven was located at Double Springs, Indian Territory.

Life on the plantation as I remember it was happy and useful. Our masters were kind to us but we had to do as they said to do.

Once in a while a slave was whipped, but always in moderation. We did not raise much cotton, but we raised corn, grain and vegetables. We had plenty of hogs and horses.

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Our market was Boggy Depot and we did our trading there. The slaves did all of the work, and the Indians hunted, and fished, attended councils and guided the work done by the slaves.

There was plenty of game and we never suffered for meat. Our bread was baked most of the time in the ashes and our meat hung over the fire to roast. Our masters had very few cooking utensils and no stoves so the cooking was all done on the fire. Washings were done on the creeks by beating the clothes with the hands.

Our ~~mammies~~ made all the medicine used from herbs gathered from the woods. We would take baskets into the woods and dig and gather herbs enough to last for months.

There was a water mill at Nail Crossing on Blue River, operated by John Nail.

The slaves were not allowed to read books or newspapers after the War between the North and South began to be talked.

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Some of the slaves, however, would catch sentences and words from their masters and mistresses enough to know that there was war talk and there would be great excitement around the negro cabins at night. Some were in favor of freedom, and others were afraid they would starve. They knew nothing about taking care of themselves.

When the Indians were forced to take sides, my people, the Stewarts, took the Southern side.

We slaves were left behind to take care of the women and children, and we were still undecided whether we wanted to be free or slaves. None of us would have deserted our posts till our masters returned to tell us we were free.

The Indians underwent many horrors and great troubles for they did not understand what the war was about, and none of them wanted to fight against the Government.

When freed many of us stayed on with our masters and mistresses for we loved them, and we did not know where to go without them.

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I belonged to Mrs. Christine Bates' family and I still love them although they are dead but I like to think that they had a kindly feeling for me.

The Bates were rich and had fine carriages and horses and lived much better than the white people who lived around us.

The Indian Council House was at Armstrong Academy.

The remains of the Confederate entrenchments at Nail Crossing on Blue River can still be seen.

The Nails were Choctaws and well to do Indians, and the crossing on Blue River was named for them.

I am old and am ready to die but if I had my life to live over again I'd like to live it as I have lived. I mean I'd like to be owned by the same people who took care of me through slavery. All the useful things I knew I learned from them, and they were great good people.