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CALLAWAY, LOUELLA (Jacks)

INTERVIEW

#8661

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CALLAWAY, LOUELLA JACKS (MRS.) INTERVIEW 8561

Ethel B. Teckitt,
Interviewer.
September 11, 1937.

Interview with Mrs. Louella Jacks Callaway,
Macomb, Oklahoma.

I was born in Mississippi July 15, 1869, but I was quite a baby. My parents, James R. and Belma Jacks, moved to Texas where I grew to womanhood and married William M. Callaway.

After the opening of Oklahoma my husband and my three brothers, Christopher Columbus, Lon and Cornelius Jacks, decided that we should move to the new country. I did not want to move for I did not want to bring my children to the new Oklahoma, but the four of them overruled me and in 1896 they loaded a camp outfit into a covered wagon and leaving Erath County, Texas, started for Oklahoma.

They were gone several weeks and at last they wrote me to get ready to bring the children and come on the train to Shawnee where they would meet me. They had secured a five year lease on some school land and were going to make a home. I did not want to come but they

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assured me that we would only stay there a few years and improve the land, then we would sell out and go back to Texas. I came and we went to work to clear the land, put it in cultivation, and build a house.

There was a saw mill at Asher two miles south on the Canadian River and they built a two room log hut and covered half of it with boards and before they could cover the other half they had to quit work on the house and go to work on the farm or have no crops that year, and we needed the crop as we had nothing to live upon without it.

They covered the other half of the house with a wagon sheet and when it rained it was hard to tell which side leaked the worst.

That year they cleared and put in twenty-one acres of cotton and about three acres of corn.

To break the land they used what they called a running coulter, a round cutter which they made themselves by fastening the cutter onto an axle between two poles which came to a point and fastening a tongue

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in front of it to which they would work a span of mules to drag the coulter marking off a line which they followed with a breaking plow. They had brought a cotton planter with them from Texas.

The corn was planted by using a stick. One of the men would go ahead and jab a hole in the ground while another followed and dropped the corn in the hole, and still another followed and covered the seed by hand or by foot.

The men said that they would put the crop in and then they would go back to Texas and pick cotton enough to support us through the winter while the children and I could gather our crop, but they never found time to go back to Texas as I never have seen a better crop than we raised that year. The cotton made a bale to the acre and the corn had many ears more than a foot long. We sold the cotton at four and one-half cents per pound. The corn we used at home.

The next year the men cleared more land, cutting the trees as close to the ground as possible. Soon

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after the trees had been cut there came a very hard rain which washed this new cut land so badly that the tree roots stood in many places a foot above the ground, so that there was a bad loss in soil.

My oldest brother decided to sell out and my husband and two younger brothers bought this share of everything.

We lived in this two room house for six years and I did all my own work and took care of my six children. I had to make down beds on the floor for the family to sleep, every night of those six years. That dragging my bedding around ruined it and I did not like the country or anything about it.

Our nearest neighbor was a mile away on the south and east, while on the north it was six miles to a house. Our ^{were} neighbors the families of John and Will Moon and the N. A. Roberts and Davis families. The older members of these families are dead, but the younger ones still own the old family places.

The only time I have ever moved after coming to Oklahoma was when we built the new house after six years,

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and moved into it.

I liked everything better then and the neighbors came into the country. In those early days often as many as twenty-five would gather in for a Sunday or an all day visit.

We live yet on his same place and I hope to live here the remainder of my life.