

GIBSON, HETTIE CHECOTE DERRISAW.

INTERVIEW
#12368

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Roosevelt Derrisaw,
Investigator,
December 9, 1937.

Interview with Hettie Checote Gibson
Okmulgee, Oklahoma

Mrs. Gibson spent a few months at the old Nuyaka... Mission school which is located twelve miles west of Okmulgee. After a few months in that school she was sent to Harrell Institute in Muskogee which she attended for three years.

The old Nuyaka Mission school was sold. It is now only a public school, although some of the old buildings are still standing. Neither does the Harrell Institute exist at this time.

Hepsey Powell, Mrs. Gibson's aunt, has told her many things they used to do when in Alabama. Her aunt had an old spinning wheel which she used to make yarn, with which she made mittens, stockings, and other knitted things. She would card the wool in a big heap on a woven basket. Then she would take the wool and wash it good and bleach it. When that process was completed, the wool was ready to spin into yarn.

When they were at their old home the folks used some kind of root which was called 'condee' to make bread. It looked like flour. The roots of this

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plant were pulled and stacked in a pile and left to dry and be bleached by the sun. After so many days the roots were taken up and pounded with a pestle and mortar into flour.

The Indians lived in log huts; some were covered with bark and some with grass. They did very little farming. They planted corn, beans, pumpkin, potatoes and tobacco. Sometimes sweet potatoes were planted once and left in the ground to produce for the next year's harvest.

The men would go on hunting trips any time during the year and hunt as long as three months. They would bring the game back on horses; sometimes they would roast the deer meat and dry what they could and bring back home.

Blue Dumplings are made of White Indian Corn. First the corn is washed in hot water with wood ashes till the husk is clean of the corn. Then the corn is spread out on the table for a while so it will be dry damp. Then it is put into a mortar and pounded with a pestle. After that the beans hulls are burned in a pot or kettle (any kind of beans may be used). When the corn is all crushed and put into pans (which have very deep bottoms),

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the bean hulls are crushed fine and sifted on the corn meal. The burnt bean hull powder and white corn mixed together makes it appear blue. For a different flavor they would mix small sweet potato chips with the dumplings or beans if desired.

Sweet potato bread is made by grating sweet potatoes, especially large sweet potatoes. After potatoes are grated, add a small amount of grease or lard. Then mold into biscuit form and put into a hot oven and bake.