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Field worker: Maurice R. Anderson

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Biography of Ebnezer Cutnezer Kemp (Negro)

Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

Born in 1863 at Old Doxtol in Kiamichi Mountains,
Indian Territory.

Father: John Kemp

Mother: Mlenia Kemp

My father and mother came to Indian Territoy with the Mississippi Choctaw Indians and Jackson Kemp a white man. Jackson Kemp had a Indian wife. He owned my father and mother. I was a small boy when we were freed, but my father told me later about how they did in slave time. My father said after we were freed he farmed for old Master Jackson Kemp until 1870. I can remember events that took place then, but I do not remember their dates. I know we moved from the Kiamichi Mountains to Blue Creek east of Tishmingo, Oklahoma in a wagon pulled by 4 steers. My father went to work for a white man who owned a gin at Cross Roads on Blue Creek east of Tishmingo, Oklahoma. We lived in a log house furnished for my father by this white man who owned the gin.

I remember a government trail that came through there and on out by Fort Arbuckle and to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This was a government mail route. They would come by with 4 horses to a stage coach, the driver would be sitting in a seat on top

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and the coach was underslung. My father said it was the government mail stage. We lived there about 2 years then we moved to Cherokee Town, Wynnewood, Oklahoma and my father went to farming for Doctor Warner. This Dr. Warner was the doctor who lived in the Kiamichi Mountains about 5 miles from Master Jackson Kemp who owned my father and mother, and he owned lot of negro slaves. After the slaves were freed he came to Cherokee Town and his farm was east of there. His wife was a Choctaw Indian.

We would bring our corn to the Old Jack Gardner grist mill east of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma on the Washita River. This mill had a big wheel with paddles on it, and that was what furnished the power to turn the grinder. We hauled our cotton to a gin owned by Mr. Spear, north of Pauls Valley on the Washita River. It was run by a big wheel fixed out in the river to turn the machinery. We used to make our bridles and lines out of Hickory Bark. We would get the bark while it was green and would plait it together and every night we would soak them in water to keep them soft.

I never wore any shoes until I was about 13 years old. I only had shirts made out of striped cloth called, Hickory shirts, they were long like a dress. A white man got me a pair of shoes and a pair of overalls for helping him make some boards. We used a hand axe called a fro to hue the logs down and makeboards out of them. I have gone off in the morning hunting with my father's gun, an old muzzle loader and

KEMP, EBENEZER CUTNEZER. INTERVIEW.

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go come in the evening with 2 or 3 turkeys or a small deer. I don't know the year I was married in, but I was married the day before that coldest day we have ever had. It was so cold the fire would not burn very good. Lots of people and some of our mules and horses froze to death. My father chopped our home made bed-stead up and table to keep warm, It was so cold you could not stay outside very long. Three days after that cold day I cut fish out of the ice 2 to 3 feet long, froze solid in the ice. We had plenty to eat in those days, turkey or deer meat at every meal. We farmed there until in 1901, then we moved to Pauls Valley and farmed around there.

My father died in 1902 at Pauls Valley, Oklahoma. He claimed he was 102 years old. I helped clear up West town in Pauls Valley, that is negro town now. My mother died in 1931, she claimed to be 119 years old. I am 74 years old and I can do as much hard work as any man. I have seen my father plow with homemade plow made out of Oak and bois'arc. He would work 2 and sometimes 4 steers to it and only had a long whip made out of hickory bark with which he drove them.

This aged negro now lives in West town, Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.

(end)

Note by Fieldworker: The Jack Gardner, above referred to, was really Zack Gardner.