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Field Worker
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Interview with Mrs. Fannie Davis
North McAlester 20 Miles.

I moved with my parents when I was two years old from Mississippi to Arkansas; then a few years later moved some few miles north of McAlester.

Our house was made of logs twenty-four feet long with puncheon floor, a chimney at one end and with a single door at the side. Here we cooked, ate and slept. Our light was furnished by pine knots or by string twisted and put in tallow.

The chimney was made of split pine logs with mud to stop up the cracks. We had a squirt gun my father had made from cane and we used this every night to squirt up the chimney to prevent fire.

A hole bored through the door held a chain which fastened through cracks between logs to lock the door. The roof was made of logs laid across and had no nails.

We cooked over a fireplace. We dried our apples, peaches, blackberries, raspberries, corn, pumpkins, beans, peas, never having less than a bushel of each. We planted everything we wanted.

We had another room built in the yard where we spun and did our weaving and carding. We made our own thread, some

fine for our fine sewing. We made our men folks' clothing, never buying a garment. We carded and spun our thread and knitted our stockings and garters and the men's suspenders.

My sister was rocked in a black gum log which my father had split and made into a cradle.

In moving, my father drove the oxen while I rode a mule and drove a cow. During the night when we were making the move my mule got choked on a corn cob and died. My grandfather tanned the hide and made a pair of shoes for himself and for me. We were very proud of these. Instead of tacks they were held together by pegs of maple, and a tanned squirrel hide was used for shoestrings.

For "battling day," which meant wash day, my father got a black gum log about three feet around, hollowed it out at one end for about four feet to hold the clothes, built four legs for it, and bored a hole to let out the water. The stopper for this hole was made of corn cob. We had a round stick to "battle" the clothes, for we knew nothing about a wash board. We made our soap from cracklings and grease we had saved from time to time.

We raised our own broom corn, making the handle for our broom from white oak.

Holes bored in a board about a foot square held shucks to serve as a mop.

We knew nothing about corsets, but made what we called a laced jacket out of cloth using white oak for stays.

Our church was a log building about 30 feet long with the chimney on one end and the door in the other. There was only one song book. The preacher would read a verse, we would sing it in unison, then he would read the second verse. The church was of Baptist denomination.